



Kidney Health Research Grants Policies

IMPORTANT DATES

Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline:	October 1, 2025
Application Deadline:	November 14, 2025
Anticipated Date for Notice of Award:	March 2026
Funding Start Date:	July 1st, 2026

If the deadline falls during a weekend or on holiday, the deadline will be the next working day. Please note that all deadlines are at 11:59 pm EST.

The Kidney Health Research Grant Policies 2026 Competition supersedes all previous Kidney Foundation of Canada Kidney Health/Biomedical Research Grant Policies. Applicants should always refer to the latest version. The Kidney Foundation of Canada may, without notice, alter the programs or terms of a grant. Any major changes will be announced immediately on the KFOC website at www.kidney.ca, or on the [ProposalCentral](#) site. The Kidney Foundation of Canada reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and policies. Applicants should contact the National Director of Research, or the Research Grants and Awards Manager as required.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2026

- **Partnership Opportunities for the 2026 Competition**
The CSN-Otsuka Vicky Karoutas Memorial Award
The Canadian Society of Nephrology (CSN), in collaboration with The Kidney Foundation of Canada and Otsuka Canada Pharmaceutical, is establishing the Vicky Karoutas Memorial Award to support research studies addressing important issues for patients with kidney disease. Please see [CSN-Otsuka Vicky Karoutas Memorial Award - 2026 Award Guidelines](#)
- **Please note, there are NO Priority Announcements for the 2026 Competition.**

Revised: October 7, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 KFOC Vision and Mission Statement.....	1
1.2 Objective	1
2. RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY	2
3. GUIDELINES ON THE UTILIZATION OF AI IN GRANT APPLICATIONS AND PEER REVIEW.....	3
3.1 Utilization of AI in the preparation of grant proposals.....	3
3.2 Utilization of generative AI in the evaluation of grant applications.....	3
4. GENERAL INFORMATION.....	4
4.1 Incomplete / Unacceptable Applications	4
4.2 Closing of Award	4
4.3 Temporary Absence	4
4.4 Non-Employee Status.....	4
4.5 Intellectual Property and Patents	4
4.6 Privacy Information.....	5
4.7 Public Information.....	5
4.8 Ethical Requirements	5
4.9 Research Involving Clinical Trials	5
4.10 Indirect Costs	6
4.11 Assessment of Applications.....	6
4.12 Publications	7
4.13 Notification of Award.....	7
4.14 Administration of Funds.....	8
4.15 Transfer of Award	9
4.16 Themes of Research	9
4.17 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Health Research.....	10
4.18 Knowledge Translation Plan	11
4.19 Value of Grant	11
4.20 Scientific, Methodological or Budgetary Overlap: Current Funding and Pending or Contemplated Grant Submissions	12
4.21 Duration and Tenure.....	12
4.22 Renewals.....	13
4.23 Grant Reports.....	13
4.24 Future Peer Review Meetings.....	14
5. ELIGIBILITY & APPLICANT CATEGORIES	14
5.1 Applicant Categories	14
5.2 Early Career Researchers	17
6. E-SUBMISSION OF LETTER OF INTENT & APPLICATION	18
7. PRIORITY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.....	18
7.1 What are priority announcements?	19
7.2 How do they work?	19
7.3 Partnership Opportunities	20
8. CONTACT INFORMATION.....	20

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 KFOC Vision and Mission Statement

Vision:

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is committed to achieving excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life, and a cure for kidney disease.

Mission:

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease through:

- Funding and stimulating innovative research for better treatments and a cure;
- Providing education and support to prevent kidney disease in those at risk and empower those with kidney disease to optimize their health status;
- Advocating for improved access to high quality healthcare;
- Increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

1.2 Objective

The Kidney Foundation of Canada encourages and supports research across the four pillars (biomedical, clinical, health systems, & population health) to improve treatments and quality of life for people with kidney disease.

In 2019, the Kidney Foundation launched a new Strategic Research Framework, developed by a committee comprising 12 members of the kidney community including patient partners, basic and clinical scientists to advance the Kidney Foundation's mission.

One of the evaluation criteria for grant applications will be its alignment with the priorities identified in this new [Research Framework](#), outlined below. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate if/how their proposal addresses one or more of these priorities in the application form (Alignment with KFOC's research priorities). This section will be evaluated by the peer review committee and alignment with KFOC's priorities will be included in the assessment criteria for research grant applications.

The following research priority areas were identified:

- **Innovative research with the potential for transformational change**

The Kidney Foundation would like to support innovative research. This includes research that is new, unique, and potentially unconventional. These are ideas that have the potential for high impact but may span too diverse a range of disciplines or be at a stage too early to fare well in the traditional peer review process. The funding is intended to help kidney researchers pilot a project and become competitive for larger, national level grant opportunities.

The project should be feasible within the confines of the grant opportunity but not necessarily based on a significant amount of preliminary data. The Foundation wishes to spark new ideas and encourage novel hypotheses and/or generation of new knowledge, concepts and approaches that could ultimately lead to critical discoveries or major advancements to accelerate the field of kidney research.

- **Stakeholder-identified priorities to improve patient outcomes**

These priorities were identified through kidney-related James Lind Alliance exercises, as well as KFOC surveys & HORIZONS 2022 workshop. They are grouped into 5 themes:

- Communication & connectivity,
- Health System approaches,
- Promoting Health & Quality of life,
- Keeping your Kidneys Healthy,
- Treatment of Kidney Disease

The complete list of specific priorities identified is provided in Appendix A of the [Research Framework](#).

- **Health systems and population health research**

This priority focuses on increasing awareness of the impact of kidney disease on patients and improving their access to evidence-based treatments and optimal care.

The intent of the KFOC is to fund the best kidney research across all research pillars conducted at Canadian universities or other recognized Canadian academic institutions (for more information, please see the CIHR list of eligible institutions: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html>). The KFOC will, therefore, allow as many qualified researchers in Canada as possible to compete for its grants and will accept applications from Principal Applicants (see definition below, under Applicant Categories) from various communities and sectors.

All awards become tenable following announcements of the competition results.

Applicants wishing to develop or implement programs or services for patients that may require direct involvement of the Foundation or its staff/volunteers, are encouraged to reach out to the Foundation Programs and Public policy department prior to application.

2. RESEARCH INTEGRITY POLICY

Institutions receiving funds must have appropriate policies in place for investigating allegations of misconduct as outlined in the “*Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research*”¹ as published by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Any questions concerning scientific integrity or scholarly conduct that arise during the evaluation of an application will be referred back to the parent institution for that body to proceed with an enquiry. The Kidney Foundation is to be informed of the outcome of such investigations.

As a condition of funding KFOC grants, all award recipients agree to comply with the Principles and Responsibilities set out in that policy.

¹ See <https://rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/framework-cadre-2021.html>

3. GUIDELINES ON THE UTILIZATION OF AI IN GRANT APPLICATIONS AND PEER REVIEW

Adapted from the Government of Canada recommendations and CIHR policy statement which can be found at the following links:

[Guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence in the development and review of research grant proposals](#)

[CIHR Policy Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence-based technology in peer review meetings - CIHR](#)

3.1 Utilization of AI in the preparation of grant proposals

The Kidney Foundation recognizes that generative AI may be valuable to applicants in the creation and preparation of many aspects of their grant applications.

If AI is utilized, its use should be appropriately and clearly stated within the application and methods.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada *encourages applicants to refrain from the utilization of generative AI in the creation of their grant applications* and reminds applicants that Nominated Principal applicants are responsible for the content which is provided within their grant applications. This includes information, text and data/figures that are provided by trainees, co applicants, or other grant authors. To maintain research integrity, information provided within applications must be accurate, true, complete and appropriately referenced.

Utilizing generative AI may lead to inaccurate representation of information or may introduce inappropriate or incomplete acknowledgement of authorship/ownership.

Please note that applicants should also be aware that most generative AI tools incorporate data input into further queries, and therefore any information provided may no longer be considered private.

3.2 Utilization of generative AI in the evaluation of grant applications

Generative AI tools including transcription tools are potentially powerful tools which can often increase efficiency of work, and their utilization is becoming increasingly common across all sectors to increase productivity.

Peer review discussions contain protected information where confidentiality of all provided materials is required. Protection of applicant data is of utmost importance. Upload of any application information to any AI tools, or utilization of any transcription tool is strictly prohibited during the review process. These tools could result in breach of privacy and eliminate the protection of intellectual property.

Peer reviewers are recruited for their critical thought and specific expertise. AI tools do not appropriately possess this capability and are therefore inappropriate for use in this context. If review meeting attendees (including reviewers, observers, funders, or staff) are found to be utilizing AI technology in the process of review, they will be considered to be in breach of the Kidney Foundation of Canada's research confidentiality policy and be removed from the review

committee. Additional follow up such as removal of any current funding, or ability to apply to future funding from The Foundation may also be considered.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

4.1 Incomplete / Unacceptable Applications

All applicants are strongly advised to carefully read and follow the instructions and requirements outlined in the Kidney Health Research Grant Policies.

To maintain the principle of fairness to all applicants, policies must be adhered to in the preparation of Kidney Health Research Grant applications. Non-adherence to the Policies will lead to rejection (without appeal) of the application. Requiring adherence to the policies has the advantage of being unambiguous for applicants, easily enforceable by staff and/or review panels, and fair and equitable for all applicants.

4.2 Closing of Award

When research supported by an award is complete, or if for any reason the research cannot be continued, the award will be closed. Any remaining funds are frozen and cannot be reallocated to other uses. The institution will prepare the final accounting and return outstanding funds to the KFOC.

4.3 Temporary Absence

Recipients wishing to take a temporary leave, e.g., parental leave, sabbatical, must inform The Kidney Foundation. If they wish funding to continue, details on how the research will continue in their absence must be supplied. The Kidney Foundation reserves the right to discontinue funding in such instances. Transfer of the grant from one person to another in the same institution is not permitted unless written authorization is received from The Kidney Foundation.

4.4 Non-Employee Status

The granting of an award is deemed to establish neither an employer-employee nor a partnership between the grantor and grantee.

4.5 Intellectual Property and Patents

The KFOC must be informed of any commercial application arising from KFOC program-supported activity.

The KFOC program does not retain or claim any ownership of, or exploitation rights to, intellectual property developed under KFOC program funding. These are owned by the institution and/or the inventor.

Should the inventor decide to pursue commercialization of any results of the research funded by the KFOC, he or she must disclose to their institution any potential intellectual property arising from the research; he or she and the institution must make every effort to provide the greatest possible benefit to Canada from the resulting commercial activity.

The above requirement for disclosure is not intended to supersede any policy on disclosure that the institution might already have in place.

4.6 Privacy Information

Providing your date of birth, language, gender, and self-identified information on the application form, CV form or Equity Diversity and Inclusion survey is optional. However, this information will ensure accurate identification of applicants and will assist the KFOC with statistical analysis and equity of access evaluation. This information will NOT be transmitted to any entity external to the KFOC. Please note that the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion survey will be anonymous.

4.7 Public Information

Successful applicants need to be aware that the title of their research project and lay summary may be used without notification and put into the public domain, e.g., web and news releases. Applicants are cautioned not to disclose information that could endanger a proprietary position in these sections.

4.8 Ethical Requirements

By signing and submitting applications to The Kidney Foundation of Canada, applicants undertake the responsibility to ensure any experimentation will be acceptable to the institution on ethical grounds and comply with the latest edition of *Tri-Council Policy Statements: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*².

In the case of laboratory animal experimentation, the guiding principles enunciated by the *Canadian Council on Animal Care* will be adhered to and that the proposed research will not be undertaken until it has been accepted as meeting the requirements regarding biological and chemical hazards as outlined in the *Public Health Agency of Canada Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines*³.

In addition, any research involving human pluripotent stem cells must adhere to the *Guidelines for Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research*⁴. The institution must notify the KFOC as to the results of the review by the CIHR's Stem Cell Oversight committee.

Please note that proof of required certification will be required to receive grant funding. Delays in applying for or attaining required certifications without reasonable explanation may result in grant funding being revoked.

4.9 Research Involving Clinical Trials

Applicants whose proposed research consists of a clinical trial must follow the latest edition of [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(TCPS 2\)](#). See in particular the guidance provided in Chapter 11: Clinical Trials. The KFOC has in addition, specific requirements not included in the TCPS2 for KFOC-funded trials (both clinical and non-clinical). These specify that grant recipients must:

² See https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html for details.

³ See <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/lbg-ldmbl-04/index-eng.php> for details.

⁴ See <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/15255.html> for details.

- a. prospectively register their trial in a registry acceptable to the World Health Organization (WHO) or the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). This includes providing the WHO Trial Registration Data Set;
- b. update the trial registry with any changes in the trial protocol and decisions taken to end a trial early;
- c. disclose serious adverse events at the end of the trial in subsequent publications and to the registry;
- d. deposit aggregate data in an unbiased, publicly accessible database (e.g. the registry); and
- e. if conducting a KFOC-funded randomized control trial (RCT), submit a report in the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) format within 12 months of the end of the trial.

Applicants are encouraged to keep in mind that the total grant amount is \$120,000 over two years and that their clinical trial application should reflect this restriction. This amount of funding may not be able to respond to the full needs of *all* clinical researchers. It is however, more than adequate and reasonable to fund pilot, observational, start-up trials or secondary analyses of databases. Reviewers will take these factors into account when evaluating these proposals.

4.10 Indirect Costs

The Kidney Foundation of Canada supports only the direct costs of research. The definition of indirect costs of research for the purposes of this policy is costs that cannot be directly associated with a particular research program or operating grant, including but not limited to costs associated with the operation and maintenance of facilities (from laboratories to libraries); the management of the research process (from grant management to commercialization); and regulation and safety compliance (including human ethics, animal care and environmental assessment).⁵

4.11 Assessment of Applications

Applications are reviewed by the Kidney Health Scientific Committee, which is composed of a Chair, two Assistant Chairs (Scientific Officers) and 20 to 30 members. Each committee member has demonstrated scientific expertise in kidney disease or related area. Appointment of the committee members takes into consideration the required expertise, regional distribution, gender and language to ensure a fair and balanced peer review process. Additional members may be added to the committee depending on the number of applications received and the expertise required. External reviewers may be included at the request of the review committee. Please note that fellows enrolled in the KRESCENT program may also act as reviewers and/or readers.

The Committee Chair reserves the right to allocate an application to a different committee that has the appropriate expertise.

The Kidney Health Research grant has undergone a phased review process. Please note that all Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the KFOC research department, the Chair and the Assistant Chairs for relevance to the vision and mission of The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

All relevant applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Full applications are reviewed by two committee members and, whenever deemed appropriate by one or two external reviewers when additional expertise is required. Each reviewer (internal or external) conducts a thorough written review and evaluates the application on the following criteria:

⁵ See [Policy on Indirect Costs of Research](#)

- Relevance to the Vision and Mission of The Kidney Foundation of Canada and alignment with the Research Framework,
- Applicant's expertise with respect to the proposed research, the synergy of the research team,
- Merit of the proposal, including originality, clarity and feasibility of the research hypotheses, background information and literature review, transparency and appropriateness of design and methodologies, statistical rigour, and achievability, and
- Appropriateness and justification of the budget.

Reviewers' comments will be made available to all applicants. The Kidney Foundation reserves the right to withhold any part of the reviewers' comments. Appeals of decisions taken on the basis of any such reviews will not be entertained.

Eligibility for priority announcements will be completed separately from the peer review process by the KFOC and potential external stakeholders. Results will not be included in the peer review process. Eligibility and relevance for the priority announcements will not be considered by the peer review committee or affect overall ranking or scoring.

4.12 Publications

Research grant recipients must acknowledge the support of The Kidney Foundation of Canada in all scientific communications and press releases related to their award. To facilitate the implementation of the KFOC's program for knowledge transfer and exchange, we request that the KFOC be notified in advance of the publication date of any major publications arising from research funded by the KFOC.

It is important that The Kidney Foundation receive information on the outcomes of the research funding program. To this purpose awardees will be asked to submit electronic copies of each publication derived from the funded research and citing the support of The Kidney Foundation as these become available as well as press releases related to the award. This information is used not only to evaluate the effectiveness of our research programs, but also as an important tool for the peer review process and to inform our community of research successes. Please note that this includes publications that are released after funding period has ended, derived from the funded work.

The Kidney Foundation expects that all those who receive support will willingly accept invitations to discuss their research with lay members of The Kidney Foundation and our audience.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is happy to assist in the dissemination of research results to our community through our numerous communication channels. We encourage all awardees to develop lay person communications for scientific accomplishments and are happy to assist in developing accessible language to reflect project advancement and successes.

4.13 Notification of Award

Successful applicants will be notified by an official letter, setting forth the amount and duration of the grant. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Dean, or the institutional administrative officer named on the application. Please note that any changes to grant funding, including deferrals, extensions, or other required alterations, will be officially noted on an updated

Notification of Award. Any policy changes reflected on the Notification of Award will be taken as the most up to date version. It is the responsibility of the awardee to ensure that all conditions are met.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by an official letter and will have access to their reviews. It should be recognized that The Kidney Foundation has a limited amount of funds and, although applications may have merit, there may not be sufficient funds to award all such applications.

4.14 Administration of Funds

Payment of Funds

Funds for all grants are to be administered through the business officer of the university or institution concerned, whose name and address must be submitted by the primary applicant. Please note that the Kidney Foundation will only pay one institution per award.

The Kidney Foundation will make equal quarterly instalments during the months of July, October, January and April of the granting year, payable in trust to the designated financial officer of the sponsoring institution.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Payments of accounts for the purposes set forth in the grant are made by the business officer of the institution or university concerned upon authorization from the grantee.

The total disbursements must not exceed the award. Any expenditure in excess of the award will not be assured by The Kidney Foundation nor reimbursed by it to the university or institution concerned.

Expenditures are only to be made for the purposes set forth in the terms of the grant, and any alternative use of funds requires written approval by The Kidney Foundation of Canada. Please note that itemized financial reports may be requested at any time and will be required at grant completion/at the request of an extension.

No-Cost Extensions

The funding year of all Kidney Health Research grants is 12 calendar months from the original funding start date. **Please note that all successful applicants will have an additional 6 months after the final payment to complete research and spend grant funds.** In the case that funding start is delayed due to certificates or other delays, all timing will be based off of the originally proposed start date. Carryover of other grant funds beyond this time will require written permission of a no cost extension from the applicant and any unspent balance of funds must be returned to The Kidney Foundation following conclusion of the grant.

Under special circumstances and upon written request to The Kidney Foundation, authorization for an extension of time to utilize the unexpended funds in continuation of research may be allowed provided the request is received **prior to the termination date of the grant (2.5 years post original funding start date)**. To request an extension the grantee should send a letter to The Kidney Foundation indicating the extension period (max. 6 months), a justification of how the funds will be used in this period as well as an interim itemized expense report reflecting the estimated amount of unexpended funds signed by the applicant and the financial officer. Please note that only ONE extension will be approved for each research grant.

Please note that if an applicant applies for additional Kidney Foundation of Canada funding while they have funds on no-cost extension, the remaining funds must be returned to the Foundation

prior to the acceptance of the new grant (i.e., an investigator may not hold funds on no-cost extension and an additional grant at the same time).

In such a case, The Kidney Foundation must be provided with a final itemized financial and scientific report no later than 90 days after the end of the granted extension.

4.15 Transfer of Award

A Grantee may seek to request to transfer the grant to another Institution. Please note that this must be approved by The Kidney Foundation of Canada. A request must include a letter duly countersigned by the appropriate authorities (Dean and Head of the Department) at the new Institution and the principal applicant(s) on the grant. The letter should also include the project title, an estimate of the remaining grant funds available, and the effective date of the transfer. You will need to contact the research department for further instructions and documents that need to be submitted (e.g., institutional signatures, ethics approvals etc. from the new institution). Note that Co-Applicants are not required to sign the letter. Arrangements will then be made to transfer a portion of the unexpended balance of the grant. The remainder of the unexpended balance will be transferred upon receipt of a final statement of expenditures from the business office of the Institution to which the grant was originally made and final approvals by The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

4.16 Themes of Research

Applicants are encouraged to think carefully about the primary theme classification for their grant. Please use the definitions below to determine which category to ascribe to your application:

Basic/Biomedical Research

Biomedical research is research with the goal of understanding normal and abnormal human functioning, at the molecular, cellular, organ system and whole-body levels, including development of tools and techniques to be applied for this purpose; developing new therapies or devices that improve health or the quality of life of individuals, up to the point where they are tested on human subjects. Biomedical research may also include studies on human subjects that presently, do not have a diagnostic or therapeutic orientation.

Clinical Research

Clinical research is research with the goal of directly improving the diagnosis of disease, the prediction of important outcomes in patients with disease or at risk of disease, and treatment (including rehabilitation and palliation), of disease and injury. It may also focus on improving the health and quality of life of individuals as they pass through normal life or disease stages. Clinical research typically encompasses research on, or for the treatment of, patients.

Health Systems and Services Research

Health services research includes research with the goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the health care system, through changes to practice and policy. Health services research is a multidisciplinary field of scientific investigation that studies how social factors, financing systems, organizational structures and processes, health technologies, and personal behaviours affect access to health care, the quality and cost of health care, and, ultimately, Canadians' health and well-being.

Population and Public Health Research

Population and public health research includes research with the goal of improving the health of the Canadian population, or of defined sub-populations, through a better understanding of the ways in which social, cultural, environmental, occupational and economic factors determine health status.

Translational Research

Research that contains significant integrated contributions from both clinical and basic/biomedical, as defined above. Please note that research involving lesser degrees of overlap or inter-pillar collaboration does not automatically qualify as translational for the purposes of review: for example, basic research that includes work on samples from humans should be categorised as basic/biomedical; clinical studies that require collaborations from basic scientists for measurements of biomarkers should be categorised as clinical.

Source: CIHR, The Four Themes of CIHR Funded Health Research, accessed at: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48801.html>

4.17 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Health Research

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is committed to advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the research system. As such, we have included new sections into the Kidney Health Research Grant to encompass this strategic priority.

All applicants **WILL BE EXPECTED** to fill in a self-identification Equity and Diversity questionnaire as part of the application process. We may ask successful candidates to repeat this questionnaire upon receipt of this award. Please note that all data will not be shared with the peer review committee and will be used to help the Foundation evaluate the accessibility and reach of its funding programs.

In addition to this questionnaire, the KFOC expects that all applicants will integrate, or justify, equitable inclusion in research studies. This includes considering fairness and equity in research participation such as the inclusion of racial minorities, justification of age of recruited participants, inclusion of language considerations, etc (where applicable), and steps taken to ensure appropriate, equitable and realistic dissemination of research results to all communities.

The purpose of this section is to promote rigorous science that is sensitive to equity and diversity factors beyond SGBA and therefore will help to expand our understanding of health determinants across all people.

The [Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2018\) – Chapter 4: Fairness and Equity in Research Participation](#), provides helpful Information surrounding research participant Inclusion considerations.

Please note that the EDI principles will be available to the peer reviewers and will be incorporated in the peer review process. If the proposed project does NOT include EDI principles or considerations, it must be well justified within the application.

Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis (SGBA) and Health Research

KFOC expects that all applicants will integrate sex and gender into their research designs when appropriate. Sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA) is an approach that systematically examines sex-based (biological) and gender-based (socio-cultural) differences between men, women, boys,

girls and gender-diverse people. The purpose of SGBA is to promote rigorous science that is sensitive to sex and gender and therefore has the potential to expand our understanding of health determinants for all people. The SGBA section of the CIHR website (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html>) provides helpful resources for applicants, including CIHR's definitions for sex, gender and SGBA, as well as information on applying SGBA to the development and assessment of research proposals.

It is encouraged that all applicants complete the tri-council training modules in SGBA.

Please note that SGBA assessment will be included in the peer review process. If the proposed project does NOT include a SGBA, it must be well justified within the application.

4.18 Knowledge Translation Plan

Each applicant is asked to include a short description of their Knowledge Translation (KT) plan. The purpose for the inclusion of a KT plan in the application is to encourage applicants to begin considering KT at the outset of their research project, to ensure that research findings are broadly disseminated and there is uptake where applicable.

Please note that the Kidney Foundation encourages investigators to broaden their KT plan and consider how their research results and progress will be communicated to the lay community, patients, and caregivers, as well as how it may be applied to result in changes to clinical practice, health policy, or delivery of care (if applicable). This section may also include detail of how lived experience partners have been integrated into the project design and progression, for KT purposes.

It is important to note that knowledge translation and communication of results should be an active consideration throughout all phases of the proposed project.

All applicants will be required to provide a detailed update on the progress of their knowledge translation activities in their end of grant report.

If applicants would like additional information on Knowledge Translation plans, please visit the following link: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45321.html>

4.19 Value of Grant

The grant application may not exceed the amount of \$60,000 CAN per year.

The maximal budget allowed for two- and three-year research grants may not exceed \$ 120,000 and \$ 180,000 respectively. Applications meeting this criterion but requesting an early release of year 2 or year 3 funds will be considered for funding only after specific permission is obtained from The Kidney Foundation. Such permission is granted only when fully justified by the project. Under no circumstances can any awardees receive more than the maximal allowable budget for any sequential two or three-year period.

These funds are allocated to assist in defraying the cost of research. This includes the purchase and maintenance of experimental animals, materials, supplies and equipment, and the payment of laboratory assistants. Salaries should conform to those of the institution in which the research is carried out and may include the employer's share of staff benefits for which such personnel may

be eligible. Personnel employed under grants are employees of the institution concerned, not The Kidney Foundation.

Grant applications for equipment only will not be considered. Equipment requested as part of the grant application will be considered provided the total amount for equipment does not exceed \$10,000 CAN. In such cases, a full and adequate justification for required equipment must be provided. All apparatus, materials or supplies purchased by the grantee for use with any research funded by The Kidney Foundation becomes the property of the institution concerned.

The maximum request for travel funds **within** a research grant application is \$2,500 CAN per year.

Graduate student or postdoctoral (non-MD) support may be requested as part of the grant. The Kidney Foundation reserves the right to fund the grant with or without support to the graduate students.

Research grants do not provide for salary support of the Nominated Principal Applicant, Principal Applicants and/or Co-Applicants (unless they are a lived-experience partner, in which case compensation can be included) and are not intended to cover the entire cost of the research for which they are provided, since space and certain basic facilities are prerequisites to an application for a grant.

4.20 Scientific, Methodological or Budgetary Overlap: Current Funding and Pending or Contemplated Grant Submissions

The Kidney Foundation wishes to encourage new and independent research projects directly related to all aspects of kidney function (i.e., physiology, biochemistry, etc.) and diseases of the kidney and urinary tract. **Therefore, to avoid any question of duplicate funding (which will automatically disqualify an application), applicants seeking or already receiving monies from other agencies or who are submitting a renewal proposal to the KFOC should clearly and unambiguously indicate the uniqueness to The Kidney Foundation of their proposal with respect to both the science and the budget by completing the *Funding Overlap Declaration* section on ProposalCentral.** Please note that the Foundation does not provide top up funds, and that projects can be evaluated only on the supplied project application. Changes made after the receipt of other funding will not be considered applicable for funding.

4.21 Duration and Tenure

One, two or three-year grants are available from The Kidney Foundation. The Kidney Foundation reserves the right to determine a shorter duration of award regardless of the initial request.

One-Year Grant

Funding for a one-year grant will run for 12 calendar months from the initial grant start date.

Two-Year Grant

Funding for a two-year grant will run for 24 months from the initial grant start date.

Three-Year Grant

Three-year grants can only be applied for by early career researchers, i.e., within 5 years of their first faculty appointment. **To be guaranteed funding as a three-year grant the application needs to be scored in the excellent to outstanding category by the Kidney Health Scientific Committee.** A maximum of three (3) three-year grants for early career researchers within the

excellent to outstanding range will be mandated to be awarded each year. Additional three-year grants may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the grant cycle. An applicant is only entitled to be awarded a three-year grant once.

To be eligible to apply for a three-year grant the Nominated Principal Applicant must submit a letter from their most recent research supervisor describing the applicant's training and research potential as well as a letter from the head of their division/department indicating the nature of the university appointment, the facilities provided and the research potential of the applicant. The applicant must also specify that they are applying for the three years of support and include a detailed budget for all three granting periods.

4.22 Renewals

The Kidney Foundation will consider further renewals providing that progress on the work initially funded by The Kidney Foundation is clearly described in the re-application and the reasons justifying the need for renewal are explained. All renewal applications must be submitted for review and assessment on a competitive basis with all other grant applications.

Please note that your previously funded application may be made available to the reviewer.

4.23 Grant Reports

Scientific/Progress Reports

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is a patient and volunteer-driven organization and is responsible to the community to highlight the outcomes of our research funding. Awardees will be asked to submit a report after each year of funding, and a final end-of-grant report six months after the end of the term of the grant. (Reporting is completed through proposal central, and reporting timelines will be illustrated in award letters).

Please note the following:

- that the Foundation may follow up on your report for further information, or request interviews or for participation in knowledge dissemination events/opportunities.
- Year-end grant reports will be mandatory for the release of further funding

The mid stage grant reports are brief and will be used: (a) to highlight successes and track productivity for impact measurement (b) to address possible challenges or required changes/mitigation strategies.

The end-of-grant report will be used: (a) to highlight successes, achievements, and the excellence of kidney researchers in Canada, (b) as a tool to help “de-mystify” research to the community and (c) to help increase donations. In lay language you will be asked to describe the work that was possible due to KFOC funding, to provide an overview of the outcomes and impacts of the project, including efforts made to disseminate the work and the KT plan, and to explain why this research is important and its potential impact in **lay terms**.

Please submit your end of grant form on time and that you can append updates as needed.

Financial Reports

Provision of Kidney Foundation funds to institutions is dependent upon timely and complete financial reporting from the financial administrators of the institutions at the termination of each funding year.

Grantees will submit an itemized account of expenditures both after each year of funding, and no later than **three months** following conclusion of the grant period. The statement must be signed by the grantee and the business officer of the institution concerned.

Please note that in the case of three-year grants, and itemized account of expenditures must be completed at the end of each granting year as well as three months following the conclusion of the grant period.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada will only send funds to one institution. In the case that funds are then transferred to the institution of a co-applicant, or for any reason leave the institution of the Nominated Principal Applicant, the grantee is responsible to ensure that all spending from any grant funds occurs within the grant policies. This includes ensuring rules around indirect costs, specific spending caps, and alignment to project budget are upheld. Please note that itemized financial reporting **MUST** be available from ALL grant funds (i.e. a transfer to another institution will require an accompanying itemized report). The Nominated Principal Applicant is responsible to ensure that all reporting and policy requirements are upheld regardless of the institution from which the spending occurs.

Should The Kidney Foundation so require, the grantee shall render whenever called upon, an itemized account of expenditures supported by an approved statement of accounts from the university or research institution that administers the grant.

Any changes to the proposed award budget require prior approval from the Kidney Foundation of Canada.

Please note that applicants that have not completed required end of grant reporting (scientific or financial), will not be eligible to receive additional Kidney Foundation of Canada funds (directly or through partnerships) until such a time as the reporting is submitted.

4.24 Future Peer Review Meetings

KFOC is committed to funding excellence in kidney research. We rely on the generous volunteerism of the kidney research community to act as peer reviewers for our research grant competitions. Participation in these peer review committees is a formal condition for award recipients for a 2-year duration. As soon as the date of the peer review meeting is confirmed, an invitation will be sent to all successful applicants. This policy has been instituted at the suggestion of the Kidney Health Scientific Committee to avoid conflict of interest among committee members while ensuring the peer review committee is representative of the Kidney Health community.

5. ELIGIBILITY & APPLICANT CATEGORIES

5.1 Applicant Categories

The KFOC defines a **Nominated Principal Applicant** as an individual who:

- Is an Independent researcher
- will be responsible for the direction of the proposed activities; and
- will assume the administrative and financial responsibility for the grant or award; and
- will receive all related correspondence from the KFOC.

In cases that more than one individual will be responsible for the proposed activities, you may denote ONE additional team member as a Principal applicant. The KFOC defines a **Principal Applicant** as an individual who shares responsibility for the direction of the proposed activities.

Note: A Nominated Principal Applicant or Principal Applicant may not apply for or hold more than one (1) Kidney Health Research Grant from The Kidney Foundation as an award. It is the responsibility of the nominated principal applicant to ensure the additional principal applicant (if applicable) is aware of this restriction.

Please note that KFOC will only interact with a single financial institution.

A **(Nominated) Principal Applicant** is a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident (e.g., a person who has been granted admission to Canada as an immigrant) who is an independent researcher. Exception: Applicants with the necessary educational qualifications who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents may be (Nominated) Principal Applicants if they are employed or can provide evidence that they will be employed (*at the time the grant begins,*) by an eligible Canadian Institution (please see the CIHR list of eligible institutions: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html>) in a position that permits them to engage in independent research activities for the duration of the grant. Note that an independent researcher is someone who is autonomous regarding their research activities (e.g. not a trainee, not a post-doctoral fellow, not a research assistant, and not under the supervision of another person, who is directing the research).

Principal Applicants (NPA and any other principal applicant) must hold an appointment, usually an employment relationship, with an eligible institution (please see the CIHR list of eligible institutions: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html>). This appointment:

- Is the major research appointment of the (Nominated) Principal Applicant;
- Allows the (Nominated) Principal Applicant to pursue the proposed research project, to supervise trainees, and to publish the results of the research; and
- Obliges the (Nominated) Principal Applicant to conform to institutional policies concerning the conduct of research, the supervision of research trainees and the employment of staff paid from the KFOC grant.

Researchers who do not qualify as (Nominated) Principal Applicant at the time of application, but who expect to be so qualified by the start of the funding period, may apply. They must provide a letter, signed by the responsible official of the Institution to administer the funds, stating the Institution's commitment to confer eligible status by the start date. If the application is successful, funds will be released to the Institution only after the researcher's status is confirmed.

(Nominated) Principal Applicants may not receive a salary, a stipend, or an honorarium from a KFOC research grant.

A **Co-Applicant** may be an independent researcher, a research associate, a trainee, lived experience partner, or a foreign researcher, who contribute to project implementation or design, or provides required expertise or resources, but does not directly hold responsibility for project progression.

Please note that the KFOC has no limitations on the numbers of applications on which a researcher can be a Co-Applicant (in contrast to principal applicant restrictions).

The KFOC defines a **research associate** as a researcher who has completed formal training in research in a discipline relevant to health research and is employed by an Institution. Although research associates may contribute substantially to the intellectual content of the research, they continue to work under the supervision of a Principal Applicant, co-applicant or collaborator, i.e. they are not independent researchers. A research associate may also contribute to, but is not ultimately responsible for, the supervision of staff, including other research associates and trainees, at the discretion of the Principal Applicant.

The KFOC defines a **trainee** as an individual in the process of learning how to conduct research or enhancing their research skills. Training must include actual involvement in research, rather than being limited to courses in research methods. A trainee being paid from a grant would normally fall into one of the following categories:

- Undergraduate student enrolled in a course of study at an academic institution;
- Graduate student enrolled in a postgraduate course of study at an academic institution. In the case of research (e.g., to complete their thesis);
- Postdoctoral fellows (post-PhD) with some form of relationship with a research institution;
- Post-health professional degree fellow (e.g., nursing, physiotherapy, medicine, dentistry) with some form of relationship with a research institution. These fellows need not be pursuing a graduate degree.

Trainees work under the supervision of a Principal Applicant or another Co-Applicant and are not themselves independent researchers. There are no restrictions on trainees regarding nationality or country of residence provided that they meet the requirements of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Research associates and trainees may receive a salary, stipend, or honorarium from KFOC research grants on which they are Co-Applicant. In cases where it is proposed to pay Co-Applicants who are research associates or trainees from the KFOC grant, the Budget of the application must provide full details of the other proposed salary sources (if applicable) for the named Co-Applicant and the time commitment to the project.

Co-Applicants who are not research associates, trainees or lived experience partners may not receive a salary, stipend, or honorarium from KFOC grants on which they are Co-applicant.

The KFOC defines a **Collaborator** as an individual whose role in the proposed research is to provide a special service (such as access to equipment, provision of special reagents, training in specialized technique, statistical analyses, access to patient population, etc.) but who is not involved in the overall direction of the research. Collaborators need not be included as signatories on the application form and may be added to the research team during the research, as requirements for additional services may emerge. Collaborators do not need to include a CV. However, all those appointed as Collaborator in the application must provide a letter, addressed to the Nominated Principal Applicant, indicating the agreement to provide the service or expertise as described in the application.

The KFOC defines a **Knowledge User** as someone who may be able to utilize research results to make policy changes, decisions or changes to programs or practice. A knowledge user does not have to have direct affiliation with an eligible academic institution, although they may provide their affiliation pertinent to the project or role. Please note that the KFOC has no limitations on the

numbers of applications on which one can act as a knowledge user (or patient/lived experience participant).

Lived Experience Partners: The KFOC encourages the inclusion of lived experience or patient partners in research projects. Lived experience partners may be included in any applicant category other than principal applicant. If co-applicants are lived experience partners, they may submit a simple CV. In all eligible categories they should also include a letter which details their reason for involvement in the work. Please note that lived experience partners should be compensated for their inclusion in the project and are eligible for compensation from grant funds. Please ensure compensation is detailed in project budget.

For more information on compensation for lived experience partners please see the following link or reach out to the KFOC for guidance.

[Considerations when paying patient partners in research - CIHR \(cihr-irsc.gc.ca\)](#)

At the discretion of the Nominated Principal Applicant, Principal Applicants and Co-Applicants who have an appointment at an eligible Canadian institution to administer KFOC funds in trust may receive KFOC funds from the “institution paid” to support the **direct costs** of their research activities relating to the work described in the application.

All individuals whose signatures appear on the signature page of the Research Grant Application Form as (Nominated) Principal Applicant, Principal applicant or Co-Applicant assume responsibilities for the legal and ethical conduct of the research, for the integrity of the research activities and reported data, and for communicating the results of the research recognizing the contributions of the other applicants.

5.2 Early Career Researchers

Though applicants at all stages of their research career are eligible for funding, The Kidney Foundation wishes to give priority to early career researchers in the field of kidney research. In order to be applicable as an early career researcher, the Nominated Principal Applicant may have held their first faculty position for no more than 5 years at the time of full application.

Three-year grants can only be applied for by early career researchers, i.e., within 5 years of their first faculty appointment. **To be guaranteed funding as a three-year grant the application needs to be scored in the excellent to outstanding category by the Kidney Health Scientific Committee.** A maximum of three (3) three-year grants for early career researchers within the excellent to outstanding range will be mandated to be awarded each year. Additional three-year grants may be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the grant cycle. An applicant is only entitled to be awarded a three-year grant once.

To be eligible to apply for a three-year grant the Nominated Principal Applicant must submit a letter from their most recent research supervisor describing the applicant’s training and research potential as well as a letter from the head of their division/department indicating the nature of the university appointment, the facilities provided and the research potential of the applicant. The applicant must also specify that they are applying for the three years of support and include a detailed budget for all three granting periods.

Note: If you are applying as an ECR, you cannot include another principal applicant on your application (you may include co-applicants, knowledge users and lived experience partners).

Early Career Researchers are encouraged to have their applications reviewed by a colleague who has received funding from a granting agency such as The Kidney Foundation.

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6. E-SUBMISSION OF LETTER OF INTENT & APPLICATION

The application process is comprised of two stages: 1) Letter of Intent (LOI) submission, and if approved, 2) Full Application submission. Once the LOI has been reviewed, the applicant will be notified via e-mail as to whether they have been invited to submit a Full Application.

Letter of Intent Instructions

The LOI submission must be completed via the KFOC online platform, ProposalCentral). If the LOI is approved, the applicant will be notified by an automated email from ProposalCentral stating that they may proceed to the Full Application phase. The LOI should be submitted by the Nominated Principal Applicant managing the project.

Project Title

This title can be changed at the Full Application stage if required but must remain representative of the submitted project. It is encouraged to maintain the same application title.

Nominated Principal Applicant(s) and Co-Applicant(s)

The Principal Applicant(s) and Co-Applicant(s) must remain unchanged between LOI and Full Application. The person who initially creates the LOI or proposal is pre-loaded as the NPA. Please note that Principal applicants may only submit or hold ONE application to the Kidney Health Research Grant. There is no limit to the number of applications on which an applicant can be a co-applicant.

Collaborators/Knowledge Users

Collaborators and Knowledge Users can be added, removed, or change roles between LOI and Full Application. There is no limit to the number of applications on which an applicant can be a Collaborator/Knowledge User.

Plain Language Abstract and Research Proposal Summary

Changes to the summary are allowed at the Full Application stage. However, the summary must remain representative of the submitted project. If the project is seen to have changed appreciably from the LOI at the full application stage in such a way that the eligibility of the application is questioned, the Kidney Foundation reserves the right to withdraw the application from the competition.

Priority Announcements/Partnerships

Please note you will be requested to select interest in priority announcements or partnerships. Applicants will be asked to fill in a Priority Announcement/partnership eligibility justification in the full application stage.

7. PRIORITY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PLEASE NOTE: There are no Priority Announcements for the 2026 competition.

7.1 What are priority announcements?

Priority announcements are specific sources of funding for applications submitted to the Kidney Health Research Grant competition. Priority announcements align to the Kidney Foundation of Canada's Research Framework and outline specific areas of emphasis.

Priority announcements allow the Foundation to focus on capacity building within specific topic areas while not reducing our goal to fund excellence across all areas of Kidney Research. Submission of all projects to the Kidney Health Research Grant competition encourages all applicants to submit their projects through the general pool, while providing targeted support when grants may fall below the general funding cut off. Please note that priority areas may change in each competition year to facilitate the Foundation's ability to work towards strategic goals.

7.2 How do they work?

Applicants must submit an application to the Kidney Health Research Grant competition, using the same application guidelines, protocols, and requirements. The applicant may also choose to select Priority Announcement(s) of interest during the application process.

Each priority announcement will include a specific area of emphasis, and applicants interested in being considered for the opportunity may be asked to outline how their project will relate to and fulfill the goals of the specific priority area. Funds available per award, and requirements for the priority announcement will be the same as those provided in the general Kidney Health Research Grant competition unless otherwise stated.

Eligibility for priority announcements will be completed separately from the peer review process, and results will not be involved in the peer review process itself. Eligibility and relevance for the priority announcements will not be considered by the peer review committee or affect overall ranking or scoring.

Applications will be assessed through the Kidney Health Research Grant peer review process, utilizing the same review panel, and reviewer guidelines. The Kidney Foundation of Canada makes funding decisions in rank order until the competition funds are exhausted.

Projects that meet the Kidney Health Research Grant funding cut off in the general competition, will be awarded in the general pool. Priority Announcement funding will be given to the next highest ranked project in the Priority area which is below the general pool funding cut off. Please note that Priority Announcement funding is derived from a distinct funding pool and will not affect the overall allocated funds from the open Kidney Health Research Grant Competition.

Priority Announcements will be awarded to the highest-ranking Kidney Health Research Grant application that has selected interest in being considered and has met eligibility relevant to the Priority announcement. Please note that streamlined applications or those rated below 3.5 are not eligible for Priority announcement funding.

In the event that a single application is considered eligible for multiple priority announcement opportunities, it will be awarded only one.

The results of priority announcement competitions will be announced on the same timeline as the Kidney Health Research Grants and will be noted as a Priority Announcement award.

7.3 Partnership Opportunities

Applicants must submit an application to the Kidney Health Research Grant competition, using the same application guidelines, protocols, and requirements. The applicant may also choose to select Partnership of interest during the application process.

Partnerships may include a specific area of emphasis, and applicants interested in being considered for the opportunity may be asked to outline how their project will relate to and fulfill the goals of the specific partnership. Funds available per award, and requirements for the partnership will be the same as those provided in the general Kidney Health Research Grant competition unless otherwise stated.

Eligibility for partnerships will be completed separately from the peer review process, and results will not be involved in the peer review process itself. Eligibility and relevance for partnerships will not be considered by the peer review committee or affect overall ranking or scoring.

Applications will be assessed through the Kidney Health Research Grant peer review process, utilizing the same review panel, and reviewer guidelines. The Kidney Foundation of Canada makes funding decisions in rank order until the competition funds are exhausted.

Partnership Projects must meet the Kidney Health Research Grant funding cut off in the general competition.

Partnership grants will be awarded to the highest-ranking Kidney Health Research Grant application that has selected interest in being considered and has met eligibility relevant to the Partnerships.

Partnership grants may include additional requirements over the lifetime of the grant, including additional training requirements, or integration of partner organization materials/dissemination to partner organizations.

The results of partnership grants will be announced on the same timeline as the Kidney Health Research Grants and will be noted as a Partnership award.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information on application submissions, please contact:

Christine Marquis

Research Grants and Awards Manager

Telephone: 438-812-5098 E-mail: christine.marquis@kidney.ca

NOTE: Please notify The Kidney Foundation of Canada if you decide to withdraw your application.