



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

3777 rue Jean-Brillant, Pavillon Hayes, bureau 4720
Montréal (Québec) H3T 0A2
514.345.3511, extension 5060
514.734.2652
research.stmary@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

St. Mary's Research Centre

CARE Research Grants

Terms of Reference



FONDATION DE
L'HÔPITAL
ST. MARY

ST. MARY'S
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION

Centre intégré
universitaire de santé
et de services sociaux
de l'Ouest-de-
l'Île-de-Montréal

Québec



McGill

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Abbreviations	3
Preamble	4
1. Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
2. Eligibility Criteria.....	5
2.1. Applicants.....	5
2.2. Project Characteristics.....	6
2.3. Expectations	6
3. Funding.....	7
4. Timeline	7
5. Application Process.....	7
5.1. Letter of Intent (LOI).....	7
5.2. Full Application	8
6. Evaluation Process.....	8
6.1. Selection Committee	8
6.2. Evaluation Criteria	9
6.3. Funding decisions	10
7. Funding Conditions.....	10
7.1. Online research ethics training.....	10
7.2. SMRC Affiliation.....	10
7.3. Research Support	11
7.4. Annual progress report.....	11
7.5. Extension requests	11
7.6. Communication	11
7.7. Final reporting	12
7.8. Acknowledgement.....	12

Abbreviations

CIUSSS	Centre Intégré Universitaire de Santé et de Services Sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal
ODIM	
MSSS	Ministère de la santé et services sociaux
PEM	Plans d'effectifs médicaux
SD	Scientific Director, St-Mary's Research Centre
ADSP	Associate Director, Strategic Partnerships, St. Mary's Research Centre
ADA	Associate Director, Administration, St. Mary's Research Centre
REB	Research Ethics Board
SMH	St. Mary's Hospital Center
SMRC	St. Mary's Research Centre
SMHF	St. Mary's Hospital Foundation
PI	Principal Investigator

Preamble

The CARE grants program was established in 2008 with the support of the St. Mary's Hospital Foundation. The goal of this program is to assist St. Mary's Hospital health care professionals and/or researchers directly or indirectly involved in patient care to attain scientific excellence.

Development of high-quality research is a key component of achieving SMH's full potential as a McGill University affiliated institution. This unique funding opportunity is designed to empower the clinical and research community, by providing both resources and scientific mentoring. It ensures that SMH reinforces its leadership role in advancing knowledge on best practices in community, proximity, and patient-centered care.

The objectives of the CARE program are:

- To support projects that contribute towards the development of clinical research and health services research capacity at SMH.
- To use research methods to improve the excellence of services delivered to SMH's patients and families.
- To help SMH health care professionals gain valuable experience in designing and leading a research project that has the potential to result in peer-reviewed publications.
- To nurture health care professionals towards research, possibly leading to an academic profile, progressive research independence and external grant funding.

This program is an ideal opportunity for members of the SMH community who would like to conduct research to get a first-hand experience as principal investigator, with the collaboration of an experienced researcher, and with access to support from the SMRC team. Senior principal investigators provide regular mentorship and support throughout the entire process. Administrative support includes knowledge transfer planification, budgeting and human resources management, statistical analysis, manuscript preparation.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Junior PIs will be matched with a senior PI affiliated with the SMRC who will act as co-PI. A Senior PI is defined as a researcher who has held at least one research grant or salary award recognized by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec*. The senior PI is expected to provide regular mentorship and support throughout the entire process. The two are expected to work in close collaboration. This collaboration will need to be demonstrated in the application and subsequent annual reports. A senior co-PI external to SMH may be appointed if the specific expertise required is not available at the SMRC. Requirements for each are detailed in the section below.

Junior PIs must familiarize themselves with the different policies, directives, and procedures at the SMRC. Junior PIs must attend an initial meeting with the Associate Director, Strategic Partnerships (ADSP) and

the Associate Director, Administration (ADA) to plan and discuss the project, as well as attend various SMRC meetings (statutory, all staff, scientific council, etc.).

It is possible for a junior PI to submit a letter of intent even if they have not yet identified a senior co-PI. Based on the research topic, the SMRC will provide guidance on how to find an appropriate senior co-PI.

2. Eligibility Criteria

2.1. Applicants

- Applicants for the CARE program must have at least 50% of their professional work (clinical, teaching, administration, research) based at SMH. SMH staff and practitioners from other CIUSSS-ODIM facilities are welcome to apply. The SMRC will evaluate their applications and assist them in obtaining CARE equivalent funding from their respective local foundations.
- Only junior PIs may apply for grant funding and support. A junior PI is defined in the Eligibility Criteria table below.
- Holders of active CARE grants cannot apply for another CARE grant prior to satisfying completion criteria of their original funding.

Eligibility Criteria	
Junior PI	Primary clinical affiliation at SMH (required): ○ Physicians: PEM must be assigned principally to the SMH ○ Allied health clinical staff: SMH must be principal site of employment ○ Non-clinical staff: SMH must be principal site of employment (applicants based at the CIUSSS Administrative Centre will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis) Research Activity (required): ○ Must be in an area of clinical activity present at SMH or other CIUSSS-ODIM facility and recognized as a research domain for SMRC (new clinical program development on the SMH campus cannot be funded by this grant program) ○ Click to view Research Domain Matrix ○ At least 50% of research work must be at SMH or other CIUSSS-ODIM facility ○ University affiliation ○ Affiliation of the junior PI can be at any post-secondary education institution (not exclusive to McGill)
Senior PI	Primary clinical affiliation at SMH (preferred, but not mandatory): ○ Physicians: PEM assigned principally to SMH ○ Allied health clinical staff: SMH principal site of employment ○ Non-clinical staff: SMH principal site of employment (applicants principally based at the Administrative Centre are eligible) Research Activity (preferred, not mandatory): ○ ≥50% at SMH or other CIUSSS-ODIM facility University Affiliation (required): ○ Affiliation to a post-secondary education institution (not exclusive to McGill)

2.2. Project Characteristics

Projects must have the following characteristics:

1. Development of research capacity within St. Mary's community:
 - The project allows the Junior PI to gain meaningful research experience in their work setting.
 - The project is grounded in clinical practice or health services optimization in areas of expertise specific to SMH and focused on the needs and priorities of the institution's clinical plan.
 - The project is relevant the SMRC strategic plan.
 - The project is initiated within SMH:
 - The research activity is principally based at SMH (including human resources and financial management at the SMRC, and research ethics review by the CIUSSS-ODIM Biomedical Committee).
 - Multicenter studies are accepted, provided that the project is led by SMH or allows SMH to assume a leadership role.
2. Innovation, scientific quality, dissemination:
 - The project will generate new knowledge.
 - The project uses an appropriate research design to answer the scientific question.
 - The project has not received prior funding from elsewhere. Ancillary studies of already funded projects are eligible, provided that they constitute a sub-study on their own. However, if any external funding is received for part of the work (e.g., a sub-study) the budget should clearly indicate which part is funded by the CARE grant and which part is funded by the external grant.
 - The project is expected to result in a peer-reviewed journal publication.

The following types of projects are *not eligible*:

- Knowledge synthesis work (e.g., review of the literature)
- Project planning only (e.g., expert consultancy, or conferences/meetings)
- Projects that propose to use any equipment or materials that are in non-conformity or prohibited for use by the MSSS.

2.3. Expectations

The junior PI is expected to have the equivalent of a minimum of ½ day per week to dedicate to their research. A confirmation of this protected time will be requested from the applicant's clinical leadership. They are expected to take on a leadership role in protocol development and revision, obtaining REB approval, implementing the research protocol, budget management, analysis, and publication of results.

3. Funding

- Funding up to \$45,000 over two years per project is available.
- Funds can be used for usual research expenses such as research personnel salary (e.g., research assistant, statistician, etc.), specialised services (transcription, student stipend, etc.) and consumables (materials, analytic software, etc.).
- Equipment may be purchased if:
 - It is essential to the conduct of the research project.
 - It is not available on the SMH campus at the time of application.
 - It complies with the policies and procedures of the relevant CIUSSS.
 - It has been approved by the clinical leadership.
 - At the end of the research project, purchased equipment reverts to the SMRC, for use on other research opportunities.
- A maximum of \$2,000 may be budgeted for conference travel within Canada (junior PI only). Additional funds may be allotted with approval from the ADA.
- PIs (junior or senior) cannot receive compensation for their work on the funded project.

4. Timeline

Key Dates	
May	Selection committee meeting
October	Selection committee meeting

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and will be reviewed by the Selection Committee at the next scheduled meeting. We encourage all interested applicants to seek assistance from the Research Support Hub during the application process by contacting Manon de Raad at: manon.deraad@ssss.gouv.qc.ca.

5. Application Process

The application process consists of two steps:

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)
2. Full Application (by invitation only, following review of LOI)

5.1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

The LOI must be submitted by the junior PI via email and consists of the following documents:

- Completed Letter of intent registration form ([available our website](#))
- LOI: Maximum 2-page single-spaced document, with the following sections:
 - Statement of need

- Research hypothesis
- Proposed methodology
- Expected results
- Potential pitfalls
- Knowledge transfer plan and expected impact
- Abbreviated CVs (10-page maximum) for the senior and junior PIs covering most significant achievements, including grants and publications.

Based on the LOI review. PIs considered eligible will be invited by email to submit a Full Application. If not already selected, a senior PI will be matched to the junior PI before submission of a Full Application.

Successful LOI applicants will receive comprehensive support from the research hub, including assistance with preparing and submitting the full application, budgetary review, statistical analysis and knowledge transfer.

5.2. Full Application

5.2.1 Content of Application

Junior PIs invited to submit a Full Application must submit the following documents:

- Completed Letter of intent registration form ([available our website](#)). The LOI registration form can be reused, unless if there are changes.
- Research grant proposal (see [Full application form, guidelines and checklist](#))
- Budget proposal (see [Full application form, guidelines and checklist](#))
- Letter of support from clinical leadership, confirming that the junior PI will have protected time to conduct the research (equivalent to a minimum of ½ day per week)
- Mentorship letter from senior PI detailing mentorship plan
- Checklist (see [Full application form, guidelines and checklist](#))

6. Evaluation Process

6.1. Selection Committee

Applications will be assessed by a selection committee appointed by the SMRC SD, consisting of scientific reviewers (internal or external), with no conflict of interest. The selection committee will be chaired by the SD. The selection committee meets two times per year.

6.2. Evaluation Criteria

The following assessment rubric will be used to evaluate proposals received.

Evaluation Criteria (5-point scale)
Project alignment with St. Mary's community - The project is aligned with areas of excellence at SMH / SMRC. - The project addresses a need or priority at SMH / SMRC. - The project builds on existing capacity / expertise within St. Mary's community. - Findings from proposed research could potentially impact patients, families, professionals, etc.
Scientific relevance - The project addresses a significant issue in patient care. - The project has potential for generating new and applicable knowledge.
Clarity of the research target - The proposal clearly indicates the research objective and its relevance. - The proposal clearly defines the study population and exclusions.
Appropriateness and relevance of methods/design used
Appropriateness of data management and statistical analysis plan
Knowledge transfer plan - The proposal clearly indicates how the findings from this research will impact patients and their families. - Appropriate knowledge users have been identified. - A knowledge transfer plan is proposed to communicate findings to SMH and scientific community at large.
Feasibility, convenience, and ethical concerns - The proposal is realistically achievable within the proposed timeframe. - The proposal is concordant to clinical service delivery lines at SMH. - The proposal is strongly supported by relevant clinical leadership. The commitment to mobilize resources and time towards the project's success is unequivocal. - There is evidence of co-investment from clinical leadership to ensure project success. - The proposal does not raise any ethical concerns that may put patients or the institution at risk.
Budget design - The budget proposal is realistic. - Equipment and human resources have been costed accurately. - Institutional contingencies have been accounted for specialty services (e.g., IT).

Career development potential

- The proposed project will contribute to the growth of the applicant's academic career (e.g., support a future application for external funding).
- The proposed project will enhance academic productivity within the clinical team concerned.
- The proposed project has the potential to support subsequent projects locally through data collected or research knowledge / infrastructure developed.

Mentorship letter

- The mentorship letter from the senior PI proposes a strong mentorship plan with detailed commitments (time, data expertise and other resources made available, etc.).

Members of the selection committee will first review applications independently. A rank list will be produced based on their scoring. The committee will then meet to review the rank list and formulate funding recommendations to the SD.

6.3. Funding decisions

The SD will inform the applicants of the funding decisions in writing. A decision may include conditional approval pending revision of recommendations made by the selection committee. In that case, the applicant will be given one month to address the selection committee's recommendations.

Funding will be released sequentially, with a maximum of 50% made available to the research team as soon as confirmation of the completion of the mandatory research ethics training is received. Remaining funds are made available upon reception of the yearly progress report.

7. Funding Conditions

7.1. Online research ethics training

The PIs of funded teams are required to complete online responsible research conduct training modules defined by the ADSP based on MSSS requirements and submit proof of completion within 30 days of the notice of acceptance. PIs with valid ethics credentials from another source must notify the ADSP as soon as possible to confirm equivalency.

7.2. SMRC Affiliation

Junior PIs are required to apply for affiliation through the ADSP of the SMRC for the duration of their CARE grant. This affiliation to the SMRC is mandatory as funding, material and human resources required to successfully complete the proposed research are managed by the ADA. As members of the SMRC, they will be invited to attend all programmed activities (e.g., Scientific Series presentations, Scientific Council, etc.); their research employees will be able to attend monthly research coordinator and / or staff meetings.

7.3. Research Support

CARE grantees will have access to the services of the research support hub: Methodological consultation & statistical analysis (up to 15 hours of these services are provided in kind to CARE grantees; additional hours are provided on a cost recovery basis)

- Additional grant application and manuscript preparation support (these services are provided in kind to CARE grantees; additional services are provided on a cost recovery basis)
- Execution of the knowledge transfer plan
- A more detailed list of services is available via the research support hub

7.4. Annual progress report

The CARE project grant covers a two-year funding period starting at the date of funding release. Grantees are expected to produce a progress report one year after the start of the funding, with the following information.

- Progress to date:
 - Indicate the current phase of the project (e.g., recruitment, analysis, follow-up, data collection, etc.)
 - Indicate number of subjects screened and enrolled to date. Indicate any significant adverse event, protocol deviation, and provide details.
 - Explain reasons for any delays and contingency plans.
- A projected timeframe for the completion of the project.
- Financial report:
 - Describe the planned expenses, with appropriate justification.

As researchers are already required to prepare a brief annual progress update for the Research Ethics Board (REB) as part of the annual renewal process, SMRC will accept copies of the most recent Renewal (F9) forms submitted via Nagano.

Failure to provide an annual progress report will result in delayed transfer of the remaining funds.

7.5. Extension requests

Funding is for a two-year period, at which point unused funds are recuperated by the SMRC. However, a 12-month no-cost extension may be granted by the SD with appropriate written justification.

7.6. Communication

Midway during the project, and within 6 months of completion, the junior PI will be expected to present the study, methods and findings at a research seminar or Scientific Series presentation.

CARE projects may be featured on the SMRC webpage and other platforms (newsletter, social media, SMHF communications, etc.). A structured abstract will be requested as needed. The senior PI will be asked to review and approve content material prior to publication.

7.7. Final reporting

Six months after the end of the project, the grantee must submit a final report with the following elements:

- Scientific report (10-page maximum, double-spaced)
 - Abstract
 - Introduction (background and research objective)
 - Methods
 - Results
 - Conclusions
 - Practice implications
- A publication-ready manuscript of the research work is an acceptable alternative to the scientific report.
- Lay language summary (1-page maximum) for communication purposes.
- 1-page final Financial Report with details of total expenditures, and unspent funds if applicable.
- Productivity summary detailing any grant proposal submitted, oral presentations, publications (and/or submissions). The grantee will be contacted periodically for updates on this document.

7.8. Acknowledgement

The SMHF and the SMRC must be acknowledged for their contribution to the study in all oral presentations, publications (and/or submissions), or other research materials emanating from the project.

Example of acknowledgement: “This research project was funded by the St. Mary’s Hospital Foundation through the CARE grants research program of St. Mary’s Research Centre”.

Last review: 2025-12-22

Next review: 2026-12-22