Award Specification: IHSPR-CAHSPR Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award

This document provides information on the call specification for applications to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research-Institute of Health Services and Policy Research (CIHR-IHSPR) & Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award.

Important Dates

Application Deadline:	**JANUARY 15, 2027**
Anticipated Notice of Decision:	**APRIL 7, 2027**
Anticipated Funding Start Date:	**JUNE 1, 2027**

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Award Description

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research - Institute of Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR) and Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) are pleased to launch the second annual **Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award** competition**.**

The Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award aims to recognize **health services and policy research (HSPR) that has made an impact, defined as having demonstrably contributed to transforming the health care system, people's lives, and/or promoted social or economic benefit.**

IHSPR and CAHSPR's definition of impact draws on the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) Impact Framework and the Canadian Health Services and Policy Research Alliance (CHSPRA) Informing Decision-making Impact Framework. The definition focuses on recognizing HSPR that has influenced decision-making; had a positive impact on health systems, health policy, service delivery and/or health outcomes; and/or contributed to broad economic and social prosperity.

This award is grounded in the broader context of modernized definitions and recognition of research excellence beyond journal-based metrics. The award recognizes CIHR's refreshed definition of research excellence and the recommendations for funders from the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

The award will be granted to an individual researcher or research team whose HSPR has created demonstrable **impact within the last 5 years (i.e., since January 2021).** The research underpinning the impact can have occurred further in the past.

The recipient(s) is honored with an award of $10,000, a Certificate of Excellence presented at the annual CAHSPR Conference, the opportunity to present their work at the CAHSPR Conference and a CAHSPR *HSPR Talks* webinar following the conference.

The Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award builds on IHSPR and CAHSPR's existing award partnership established through the Article of the Year Award, which recognizes a publication of ground-breaking health services that has significantly contributed to the field of health services and policy research.

Please Note: The Article of the Year Award and Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award are distinct awards in their objectives, eligibility and assessment criteria. **Applicants are encouraged to review the criteria for both and apply to the appropriate competition.**

Read about the inaugural HSPR Impact Award winner, Dr. Monty Ghosh, here.

Funds Available

The total amount available for this funding opportunity is **$10,000**, enough to fund one (1) award that will consist of:

- A research allowance of **$10,000** to be used toward research, and/or knowledge mobilization, and/or impact spread and scale related activities.

CIHR and partner(s) financial contributions for this award are subject to availability of funds. Should CIHR or partner(s) funding levels not be available or are decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, CIHR and partner(s) reserve the right to reduce, defer or suspend financial contributions to awards received as a result of this funding opportunity.

The award recipient(s) will also receive:

- Promotion of their/their team's work through various IHSPR and CAHSPR channels (e.g., websites, newsletters, social media)
- Certificate of Excellence from IHSPR and CAHSPR
- 1 complimentary conference registration to the 2027 CAHSPR conference
- Potential opportunity to present their work at the 2027 CAHSPR conference
- Opportunity to orally present at a CAHSPR *HSPR Talks* webinar

Award Objectives

This award is intended to recognize **health services and policy research that has demonstrably contributed to transforming the health care system, people's lives, and/or promoted social or economic benefit.**

Specifically, HSPR that has:

- **influenced decision-making**
    - E.g., informed policy or decision-making regarding the way health services are organized, regulated, managed, financed, paid for, or delivered

AND/OR

- had a **positive impact on health systems, health policy, service delivery and/or health outcomes by advancing dimension(s) of the Quintuple Aim**, e.g.:
    - improved patient experience (e.g., reduced wait times, patient satisfaction, improved access, safety, continuity, culturally safe care, shared decision making, etc.)
    - improved healthcare provider experience (e.g., reduced burnout, workplace safety, improved retention, etc.)
    - improved population health (e.g., reduced disease prevalence/incidence, reduced incidence of hospitalization, increased preventive services, etc.)
    - improved health equity (including improved health outcomes for equity-denied groups through addressing the social determinants of health)
    - improved value for money (e.g., cost effective care pathways, less costly early intervention/prevention programs, etc.)

AND/OR

- contributed to broad **economic and social prosperity.**
    - E.g., innovation, scaled technologies, return on investment (ROI), strengthened workforce, improved health system resilience, improved public trust, improved health literacy, etc.

Important Note: The significance of an impact should not be determined solely by the number of individuals affected. Other factors that may be considered include the magnitude of the positive change achieved, the extent to which impact addresses identified barriers or gaps, and the importance of the impact to the population affected. Consideration may be given to impact that meaningfully benefits underserved, Indigenous, rural, remote, and equity-denied communities.

Eligibility Requirements

For an application to be eligible:

1. The award will be granted to an **individual researcher or research team** (e.g., involving researchers, people with lived/living experience, policy makers, health providers, trainees) whose HSPR has created demonstratable **impact within the last 5-years (i.e. since January 2021)** (Note: the research underpinning the impact can have occurred further in the past).
    - If the Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI) of the research underpinning the impact is not included as an applicant or co-applicant, the application must include a letter of support from the NPI acknowledging the submission and confirming the relationship between the research and the impact.

2. All applications must be from a current or previous recipient of an award/grant administered by CIHR or a CIHR-funded entity (e.g., SPOR SUPPORT Units, NEIHRs) **OR** from individuals/teams whose research has benefited substantively from funding from CIHR or CIHR-funded entities (i.e., was co-funded by CIHR), **AND** there must be a clear and demonstrable link between the CIHR funding, the research undertaken, and the impact achieved.

3. The research underlying the impact must have been either peer reviewed and/or received research ethics board (REB) approval.

4. The lead applicant must have an affiliation with a CIHR eligible institution or a Canadian institution (including Canadian postsecondary institutions, hospitals, research institutes, governmental or non-profit organizations with a mandate for health research and/or knowledge translation).
    - If the lead applicant is not affiliated with an institution authorized to administer CIHR funds, the institution must become authorized to administer CIHR funds by the funding start date or the lead applicant may designate a co-applicant (at a CIHR eligible institution) to be the institution paid.

5. Research involving the CAHSPR Executive Director, CAHSPR President, IHSPR Scientific Director, or IHSPR staff as the principal investigator (PI) or co-PI are ineligible for this award.

6. The lead applicant may only submit one application per competition cycle. Applicants who were unsuccessful in previous competition cycles are eligible to reapply.

7. Previous award recipients are not eligible to apply.

Please note that applications falling outside of CIHR's definition of health services and policy research (Pillar 3) and the IHSPR mandate, including clinical and population health research themes, will not be considered. Applications deemed not relevant will be withdrawn from the competition.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit their submission via the online form by **January 15, 2027.**

- Applicants are required to complete an application form including details on the research undertaken, the impact achieved and evidence of the impact (including any barriers to impact), a description of how the impact was achieved (i.e., the pathway to impact[1]), and the target audience/population for the impact. The submission requires applicants to upload a separate file with corresponding links and references to evidence to validate the impact claimed in the form. If the reference is not available through a link, applicants are permitted to include two additional appendices as attachments to their application (e.g., testimonial from community(ies) impacted, infographic, video, etc.).

Guidelines

General CIHR Policies

Successful applicants funded through this funding opportunity and any other persons working on the project must fully comply with the applicable CIHR Funding Policies.

Allowable Costs

Applicants should review the Use of Grant Funds section of the Tri-Agency (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) Financial Administration Guide for a complete listing and description of allowable costs and activities.

Conditions of Funding

- The applicant must consent to the use and disclosure of full application and nominative information for relevance review and funding decisions at the time of application.
- The awardee is required to attend the May 2027 CAHSPR Conference to receive the award and present the research during the conference. In the case of research teams, the lead is required to attend.
- Awardee will be asked to share a brief description of how funds were used and the impact of receiving the award.

Review Process and Evaluation

Stage 1: Relevance Review Process

CIHR-IHSPR and CAHSPR will perform an administrative review to ensure that applications are complete and meet the **Eligibility Requirements** listed above.

[1] Consider the Canadian Health Services & Policy Research Alliance (CHSPRA) *Pathways to Impact model* outlined in the CHSPRA Making an impact: A shared framework for assessing the impact of health services and policy research on decision-making.

In addition, applications will be reviewed for **relevance** to ensure that the research behind the impact is:

1. Substantively relevant to CIHR's definition of Pillar 3 Health Services Research **and**
2. Substantively relevant to the IHSPR mandate and the CAHSPR vision **and**
3. peer reviewed and/or received research ethics board (REB) approval.

Please note that applications outside of Pillar 3 Health Services Research, the IHSPR mandate and CAHSPR vision, including clinical and population health research themes, will not be considered relevant. Applications that are incomplete and/or deemed ineligible or not relevant will be withdrawn from the competition.

Stage 2: Review Process

A review committee comprised of members of the HSPR community (including researchers, patients, health providers, and decision-makers) will review the applications. The review consists of two steps, with both steps using the same evaluation criteria, listed below. First, reviewers will individually review and score the applications. Second, members of the committee (who are not in conflict of interest with the applications) will meet virtually to discuss the top ranked applications (based on score) and rank order them to determine the winner.

Decisions will not be open to appeal and the funders reserve the right to amend the application process.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

1. **Evidence of realized impact and benefits to the target audience:**
   - evidence of research impact and of benefits to the target audience (see a non-exhaustive list of examples under the Award Objectives section, above)
   - how important and far reaching the impact is for the target audience
   - the strength and relevance of the research underpinning the impact
   - how well the impact is described/articulated and documented/substantiated

2. **Evidence of how the impact was achieved:**
   - how the impact was achieved (e.g., evidence-informed pathway to impact [i.e., "the structured process through which research findings are translated into real-world applications that generate benefits for society, policy, or practice"], including problem identification, research conduct, engagement and dissemination, key contextual factors and enablers to impact [including unanticipated policy windows, etc.], resources supporting impact, adoption, impact realization, etc.).
   - the appropriateness of the engagement approach efforts taken to involve relevant knowledge users or interest holders (e.g., decision/policy makers, people with lived experience, health providers, communities, the public, etc.) in the research and/or knowledge mobilization/engagement activities and the impact of the engagement.

The evaluation team recognizes that certain individuals and teams may have access to more funding and/or institutional resources for research impact. Reviewers will be asked to consider the individual/team's ability to catalyze change based on the resources available.

3. **Clear, demonstrable link between CIHR funding/support, the research, and the impact.**
    - Describe the role and/or value of CIHR funding/support in the impact(s) described (i.e., what was achieved with CIHR funding/support that may not otherwise have occurred?)

Funding Decision

The top-ranked application will be awarded the IHSPR-CAHSPR Health Services and Policy Research Impact Award. The name of the successful awardee/team will be published on the IHSPR and CAHSPR websites.

Contact Information

For all inquiries please contact:

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Sponsor Description

Institute of Health Services and Policy Research (IHSPR)
IHSPR is one of the 13 institutes that comprise the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Canada's federal funding agency for health research. IHSPR is dedicated to positioning Canada as a global leader in optimizing health and health outcomes in the population through the provision of evidence-informed health care services. IHSPR's mandate is to support innovative research, capacity-building and knowledge translation initiatives designed to improve the way health care services are organized, regulated, managed, financed, paid for, used and delivered, in the interest of improving the health and quality of life of all Canadians.

Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research
The Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) is a multidisciplinary association dedicated to improving health and health care by advancing the quality, relevance, and application of research on health services and health policy. As the largest and most diverse association of its kind in Canada, CAHSPR provides members with unique opportunities for networking, research collaboration, and career advancement.

Additional Information

The next Annual **Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) conference** will take place in Ottawa from **May 17 – 20, 2027**. The award winner is expected to attend and will receive complimentary registration, receive their award from the CIHR-IHSPR Scientific Director and CAHSPR Executive Director during the conference awards ceremony, and have an opportunity to deliver a brief oral presentation about their research impact. Additional details will be shared with the notice of decision.