



Michael Smith

**Health
Research BC**

Evaluation of Scholar and Research Trainee Talent Development

Invitation to submit a letter of interest

Letters of interest must be received via email to
Rebecca (Becky) Gormley, Research & Evaluation Specialist
Evaluation & Impact Analysis
rgormley@healthresearchbc.ca
by 5:00pm PST on April 18, 2023

Issue date: April 3, 2023

Background

Michael Smith Health Research BC (Health Research BC), funded by the government of British Columbia, is BC's health research agency. Health Research BC strengthens the province's health research system by supporting the people, institutions and activities that generate and use research-based knowledge to promote, restore and maintain the health of British Columbians. Committed to deep collaboration in improving the health of British Columbians, the health system and the economy, Health Research BC:

- Builds research talent for BC's future,
- Catalyzes change for a stronger health research system, and;
- Mobilizes communities for research impact.

Attracting, retaining, training, and growing a diverse workforce is critical for a strong knowledge economy, a well-functioning health care system and resilient communities. The case for creating the former Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research stemmed from data demonstrating that BC underperformed in receiving federal health research funding as compared to other provinces. In the late 1990s, BC's share of funding from the Medical Research Council of Canada (predecessor to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)) was in decline. Alberta's share was steadily increasing during this time, while Ontario and Quebec received the majority of federal funding.¹ To advance BC's ability to secure federal funding, Health Research BC established a portfolio of salary award programs in 2001 supporting a range of talent – from trainees and early career scholars to more senior researchers. As a result of these investments, CIHR funding to BC health researchers grew more than three-fold, rising from \$35 million in 2000/01 to \$116 million in 2014/15.²

Since 2001, Health Research BC (and former Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research) has supported approximately 520 scholars and 1,488 trainees through the Scholar and Research Trainee award programs worth over \$280 million. It is recognized that academic career paths are changing, and the pandemic has stalled research careers and programs, revealed talent gaps, and exacerbated inequities in research jobs. To understand the performance and impact of our salary awards as well as support future decisions on research competitions offerings and design, we are calling for proposals to support a review of the impact of our 20-year history funding research talent in the context of the current landscape of research talent strengths, gaps, and needs for the future. It is anticipated that work will be complete within an 8-month timeframe with a funding amount of up to C\$150,000.

Health Research BC invites letters of interest from organizations and/or individuals with demonstrated experience and sector knowledge, to undertake a review of the impact of the past 20 years of research talent funding by the former Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research and the current Michael Smith Health Research BC. This review will include a synthesis of the current landscape of health research talent including the strengths, gaps, and needs to inform future decisions about program design.

¹ Evaluating British Columbia's Performance in Health Research: Technical Report 1996 – 2006 (MSFHR, 2007).

² Canadian Research Information System – <http://webapps.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/funding/search>.

RFP Process

Interested parties are requested to submit a letter of intent demonstrating how they meet key criteria as described below, by **5pm PST on April 18, 2023**. Up to three proponents will then be invited by April 25, 2023 to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be due May 25, 2023. Those who submit a letter of interest are under no obligation to submit a full proposal. **For more information, you can view the RFP [here](#)**. The RFP timeline is summarized as follows:

| Action | Target Date |
|---|----------------|
| Release of RFP | April 3, 2023 |
| Deadline to submit a letter of interest | April 18, 2023 |
| Top three proponents to receive invitation to submit proposal | April 25, 2023 |
| Full proposals due | May 25, 2023 |
| Successful proponent will be identified | June 5, 2023 |
| Project begins | Mid-June, 2023 |
| Final report to be submitted | March 2024 |

Letter of interest content and format

In the letter of interest, interested parties should specify the name of the lead and other key collaborators and describe how they meet the following key criteria:

- Demonstrated knowledge of the research talent landscape in BC.
- Demonstrated experience with research impact assessment.
- Demonstrated experience with qualitative or mixed methods research.
- Demonstrated experience with completed projects of similar size and complexity.
- Demonstrated experience working with equity frameworks or an equity lens in evaluation activities.
- Demonstrated experience working with large, complex datasets and integrating multiple sources of data.
- Demonstrated knowledge of research talent funding in healthcare, including standard metrics and appropriate disaggregation.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and familiarity with the BC health research system.
- Demonstrated experience with methods appropriate for assessing strengths, gaps and needs in a jurisdictional talent pool.

Proponents are responsible for disclosing to Health Research BC any and all real or perceived conflicts of interest and if applicable, how it will be managed. Letters of interest will not be evaluated if the Proponent's current or past corporate or other interests are, in the opinion of Health Research BC, deemed to be a conflict of interest in connection with this request or the activities or mandate of its facilities. Please reach out to **Rebecca (Becky) Gormley** if there are any questions about conflicts of interest.

Any individual or organization wishing to respond should confirm by submitting a letter of interest, not to exceed 5 pages, to **Becky Gormley** at rgormley@healthresearchbc.ca with the subject line "Evaluation of Scholar and Research Trainee Talent Development: Letter of Interest".