



health  
INNOVATION HUB



# Innovation Pathway Program Guide

November 1, 2023

Strategic Innovation Division, Ministry of Health

# Innovation Pathway Program Guide

## Objective

The British Columbia Ministry of Health (the Ministry) works collaboratively with system partners to build on existing strengths and enable an innovation ecosystem that supports and advances innovation across the health system. *The objective of the Health Innovation Pathway program is to identify and support the testing and assessment of promising innovations in clinical settings.* The program also helps to support a thriving and active innovation culture and environment in health authorities and the health system. This program guide is intended to provide a high-level overview of the program and a roadmap of how to apply. Please be aware that the Ministry may modify this guide from time to time as the program evolves.

The Ministry will invest up to \$1,000,000 each fiscal year (approximately \$500,000 per intake) to support the testing of innovations with potential for broad system impact. There is no maximum budget for each proposal, although the average award is expected to be approximately \$50,000. Funds must be used in the fiscal year they are provided. Any unused funds must be returned to the Ministry. Collaboration with others in the innovation ecosystem and health system partners is highly encouraged and receiving funding from other sources does not eliminate projects from consideration for program funding.

The program uses a transparent and standardized process to intake and assess innovations that are proposed by health authorities and their partners. The Ministry is seeking innovations that address an existing gap or problem, benefit the system, have scientific merit, are aligned to health system priorities, and have potential for broad system impact.

Health System priorities are articulated in Ministry [Service plans](#) and mandate [letters](#). The Ministry may prioritize funding supports for innovations impacting current areas of focus including access to primary care, seniors care, mental health and addictions care, cancer care, ambulance services, surgical and diagnostic services, and hospital services.

## Eligibility

All innovation proposals require a health authority to sponsor the initiative<sup>1</sup> and a clinical lead to champion and oversee the clinical aspects of the initiative. Health authorities will ensure a link to health system expertise, access to key partners, report to the Ministry on key indicators/ measures, and will provide oversight of the initiative. To qualify for funding, innovation proposals must:

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<sup>1</sup> Community health care providers with innovation ideas that are community-based and require no health authority involvement should connect with the Health Innovation Hub team at [healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca).

- Be supported with evidence of a reasonable expectation of benefit realisation.
- Demonstrate potential for broad system impact.
- Clearly indicate how Ministry funds will be used.
- Provide measurable objectives for the initiative that will be tested and assessed. To support the assessment of the innovation, proposals must:
  - Identify and report on at least three performance indicators that will demonstrate the benefits of the innovation.
  - Identify and report on at least one measure of potential cost savings (cost avoidance) and/or return on investment.
- Be aligned with [Ministry priorities](#) for the health system.

Reporting to the Ministry on indicators/measures will occur on a regular basis and must be completed within two years of receiving funding. Measures identified can signal when there is a need to pivot the approach or possibly discontinue if/as appropriate and help form the basis for a business case for the spread of the innovation if results/outcomes are compelling.

## Funding Mechanism

Funds will be transferred to health authorities through a shared cost arrangement or through the quarterly budget transfer process. In the latter process, a funding letter will outline the amount of funding, identify the project, and the expected use of funds. Both funding mechanisms involve a letter of understanding which outlines the project, expectations of all partners, and measures which will be reported to the Ministry on a quarterly basis. Funding can generally be used for:

- Labour costs for individuals working directly on the project.
- Reasonable material costs.
- Equipment required for the project.
- Software or information databases.
- Subcontractors for direct project work or evaluation.
- Costs which the BC Ministry of Health preapproves in writing as an eligible expense.

## How to Apply

1. Application for innovation idea funding is accomplished through the program [intake form](#). The link to the digital form can be obtained from health authority innovation contacts (see Appendix A) or by emailing [healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca).
2. Complete the intake form and forward it to the innovation contact for your health authority. Each health authority will submit up to five projects for Ministry consideration.

3. Questions or requests for the intake form should be sent to [health authority contacts](#) or [healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:healthinnovation@gov.bc.ca).
4. There are two intake/funding cycles for fiscal year 2024/25. Proposals should be submitted following the schedule below.

<b>Intake Form to Health Authority Innovation Lead</b>	<b>Intake Form Submission to the Ministry of Health</b>	<b>Approval Signatures on Letter of Understanding</b>	<b>Funding Transferred to Health Authority<sup>2</sup></b>
January 19, 2024	February 5, 2024	March 8, 2024	April 15, 2024
June 28, 2024	July 15, 2024	August 30, 2024	September 27, 2024

5. To better understand the proposal and ensure alignment to priorities, Health Innovation Hub staff will contact the submitter, health authority innovation contacts and Ministry program areas. The collection of additional information may be required.
6. Proposals will be considered using the four criteria in the decision support tool (see Appendix B). While the proposal will be given a score (XX/54), the purpose of the criteria is to understand the proposals better and fit for the program. The score itself is not the single determining factor for a funding recommendation.
7. The Health Innovation Hub team will prepare a package of materials containing gathered information, decision support scores, and recommendations for the Assistant Deputy Minister. Decisions will be communicated within 6 to 8 weeks from the date proposals are submitted by the health authority to the Ministry of Health.
8. If funding is approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister, the Health Innovation Hub team will inform the submitter and work with them to generate a funding letter (letter of understanding) and/or the terms of the agreement (for Shared Cost Arrangement).
9. The funding letter will outline the funding amount transferred to the health authority and outline expectations of how Ministry funds will be used. It will also indicate timelines for submission of agreed upon measures for the initiative.
10. If funding is not approved, the Health Innovation Hub team will contact submitters to discuss the rationale for the decision.

The Ministry of Health reserves the right to conduct public communications, announcements, events, outreach, and promotional activities related to the Pathway program and innovations supported. The submitter agrees to connect with the Ministry to coordinate any communications they are planning about Pathway funded initiatives. Advance notice of at least 30 days is required.

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<sup>2</sup> Funding transfer dates are approximate.

## Health Innovation Pathway Program Contact Information

Fiona Macpherson  
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BC Ministry of Health  
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Executive Director, Innovation Branch  
Strategic Innovation Division  
BC Ministry of Health  
Office: 250-952-2346  
**Email: [Kevin.Samra@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kevin.Samra@gov.bc.ca)**

## Appendix A: Health Authority Innovation Contacts

Organization	Innovation Contact	Email
<b>Fraser Health Authority</b>	Mel Dube	<a href="mailto:Melusi.Dube@fraserhealth.ca">Melusi.Dube@fraserhealth.ca</a>
	Shruti Chhibber	<a href="mailto:Shruti.Chhibber@fraserhealth.ca">Shruti.Chhibber@fraserhealth.ca</a>
<b>Interior Health Authority</b>	Deanne Taylor	<a href="mailto:Deanne.Taylor@interiorhealth.ca">Deanne.Taylor@interiorhealth.ca</a>
<b>Island Health Authority</b>	Matthew Miller	<a href="mailto:Matthew.Miller@islandhealth.ca">Matthew.Miller@islandhealth.ca</a>
	Graham Payette	<a href="mailto:Graham.Payette@islandhealth.ca">Graham.Payette@islandhealth.ca</a>
<b>Northern Health Authority</b>	Julia Bickford	<a href="mailto:Julia.Bickford@northernhealth.ca">Julia.Bickford@northernhealth.ca</a>
<b>Vancouver Coastal Health Authority</b>	Rachael Ritchie	<a href="mailto:Rachael.Ritchie@vch.ca">Rachael.Ritchie@vch.ca</a>
	Fash Fashola	<a href="mailto:Fash.Fashola@vch.ca">Fash.Fashola@vch.ca</a>
<b>Providence Health Care</b>	Holly van Heukelom	<a href="mailto:Hvanheukelom@providencehealth.bc.ca">Hvanheukelom@providencehealth.bc.ca</a>
	Balraj Bains	<a href="mailto:Bbains@providencehealth.bc.ca">Bbains@providencehealth.bc.ca</a>
<b>Provincial Health Services Authority</b>	Trushna Kassan	<a href="mailto:Trushna.Kassan@phsa.ca">Trushna.Kassan@phsa.ca</a>
	Eric Hempel	<a href="mailto:Eric.hempel@phsa.ca">Eric.hempel@phsa.ca</a>
<b>First Nations Health Authority</b>	Haike Muller	<a href="mailto:Haike.Muller@fnha.ca">Haike.Muller@fnha.ca</a>
<b>Ministry of Health</b>	Fiona Macpherson	<a href="mailto:Fiona.A.Macpherson@gov.bc.ca">Fiona.A.Macpherson@gov.bc.ca</a>
	Kevin Samra	<a href="mailto:Kevin.Samra@gov.bc.ca">Kevin.Samra@gov.bc.ca</a>

## Appendix B: Decision Support Tool

The purpose of this tool is to help consider the fit of innovation proposals for the program.

<b>FIT AGAINST CRITERIA MATRIX</b>					
<b>NOTE: ALL INITIATIVES REQUIRE A HEALTH AUTHORITY PARTNER AND CLINICAL SPONSOR</b>					
HA Partner & Clinical Sponsor Mandatory Criteria	Pass or Fail: _____				
<u>Scoring</u> 0 = None 1 = Minimal 2 = Moderate 3 = Substantial					
	Substantial	Moderate	Minimal	None	SCORE
Criteria	3	2	1	0	3
<b>1. Innovation Gap</b>					
Innovation addresses an existing gap or problem					
<b>2. Value Proposition</b>					
Potential clinical impact (patient health)					
Impact on patient and family experience					
Impact on provider experience					
Impact on population health					
Impact on health system sustainability					
Impact on health equity					
Impact on health human resources					
Impact on social determinants of health					
Impact on the environment					
Potential for broad system impact (spread/scale)					
<b>3. Scientific Merit</b>					
Reasonable expectation and ability to demonstrate benefit/success					
Study design is methodologically sound and generates quality evidence					
Risks considered (and mitigation embedded) in study design					
Suitability of project team and engagement of partners					
<b>4. Relevance</b>					
Alignment to health system priorities					
Measurable impacts within study period					
Potential interest across health system					