

# **AHA CENTRE**

A PROJECT OF CAAN

**A Guide to Writing a Canadian  
Institutes of Health Research  
(CIHR) Operating Grant**

# Why we made this presentation



We hope that you find this resource helpful as you start to plan your research proposal. As you will see, there are many pieces that you need to be attentive to in order to have a complete proposal.

**This presentation is a guide only!**

The funder may change its requirements sometimes even after the call for proposals has been launched. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you read each call before you begin planning and writing.

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# What is a CIHR Operating Grant?

- Funding:
  - Total funding amount: \$1,800,000 (approximately four grants)
    - Two General Stream
    - Two Indigenous Stream
  - Maximum funding per grant: **\$150,000/year** for up to three years (total of \$450,000 per grant)

CIHR describes the Operating Grant component of the CBR Program as a way to “contribute to the creation, dissemination and use of health-related knowledge, and to help develop research capacity, by supporting original, high-quality projects proposed and conducted in partnership with the community and academia.”

# Writing an Operating Grant: Overview

- Overall, the operating grant will include:
  - Detailed research proposal
  - Appendices
  - Budget and budget justification
  - Summary
  - Lay abstract
  - CBR principles
  - Relevance statements
  - Letters of Collaboration / Support
  - Budget support letters (if necessary)
  - CVs and Attachments by all Knowledge Users & Applicants
  - Up to 5 relevant publications



**Tip: Use this slide as a checklist as you complete each part of the grant!**

# Detailed Research Proposal

Your research proposal will explain what you want to do and why your idea is important. For an operating grant, the proposal will be **13 pages (not including references)**. Be sure to check out the **Evaluation Criteria** section of the call for proposals as that will tell you and your team what reviewers are looking for in your application.

This section can include:

- Introduction
- Purpose and Objectives
- Background (Literature Review)
- Our Approach
- Methodology
- Expected Impacts
- Our Research Team

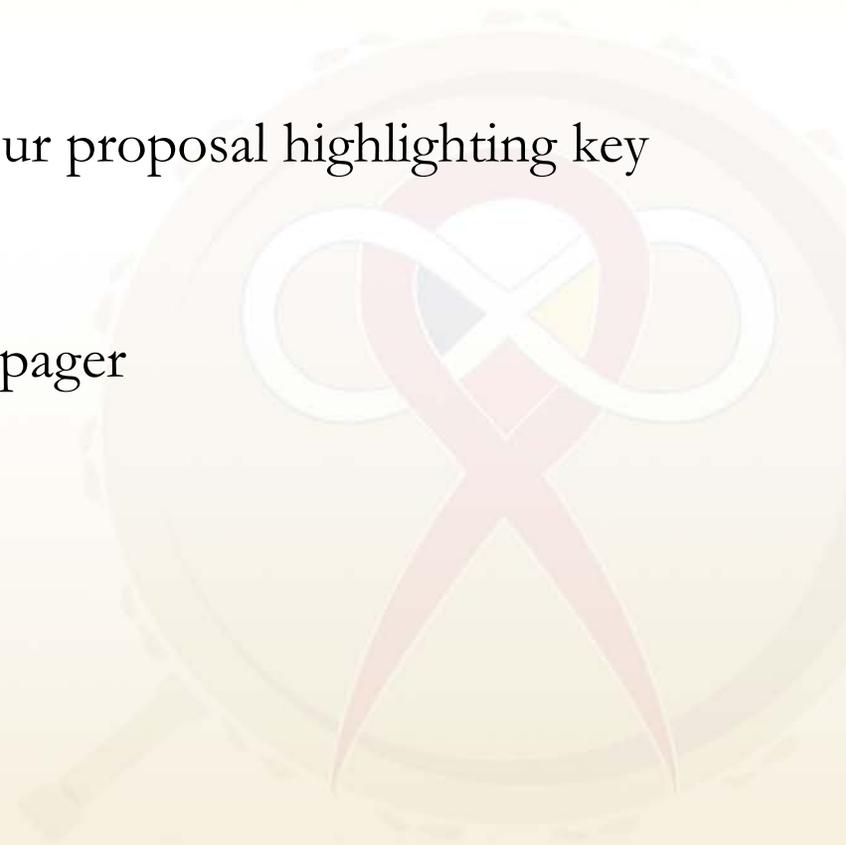
# Writing from a strengths-based perspective

Please challenge yourself and your team to write your proposal from a strengths-based perspective, emphasizing the strengths of the Indigenous community as well as the deficits we face. Writing from a balanced perspective works to help break down the stereotypes and assert First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada as the leaders and solution-holders that we know ourselves to be.



# Detailed Research Proposal: Introduction

- A brief description of the context of your proposal highlighting key issues and their relevance to your idea.
- **Max  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of page** from current 1-pager



# Detailed Research Proposal: Purpose and Objectives

- Make sure you state the purpose and objectives in your introduction
  - Remember to be **clear** and **consistent** throughout the proposal!
- And/or clearly stated research questions
- Key hypothesis, if relevant
- **1/2 page** (this section should appear on the first page, or at least the start of it)

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Purpose:** What your research project will achieve.

**Objectives:** Defines what needs to be done to meet your goal(s).

# Detailed Research Proposal: Background (Literature Review)

- Include information on HIV in the context of Canadian Indigenous Communities **as relevant to your proposal.**
- **Write this information from a strengths-based perspective: highlight things that are working in Indigenous communities – not just all of the things that are wrong!**
  - General overview of HIV among Indigenous peoples in Canada, epidemiology, discussion of contexts of risk (situate within legacy of colonialism, racism/discrimination, intergenerational trauma etc.)
  - **1 page**



# Detailed Research Proposal: Our Approach

When applying for funding through the Indigenous Stream, keep these approaches to research in mind:

1. **Indigenous/Decolonizing approach**

2. **Ethics – TCPS2**

- Check out the TCPS2 2018 document for more detail:  
<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/documents/tcps2-2018-en-interactive-final.pdf>



# Detailed Research Proposal: Our Approach Continued

## 3. Community-based research (CBR)

- CBR is conducted by the community, for the community. Its collaborative framework foregrounds Indigenous knowledge and a commitment to community involvement, relevance, and benefit, and ensures that all contributing voices are valued evenly.

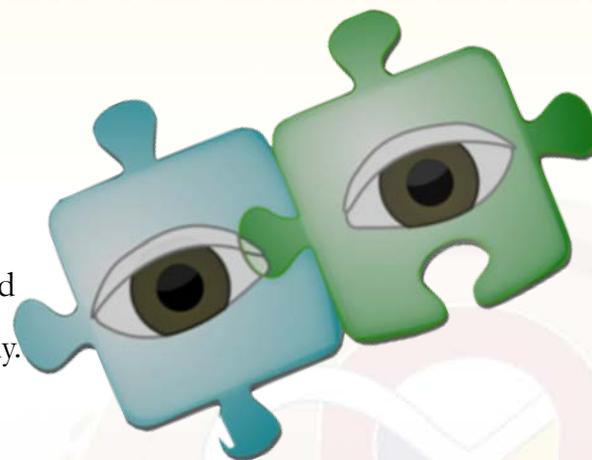
## 4. Two-Eyed Seeing

- Two-Eyed Seeing makes room for cross-cultural collaboration and works from two-or more perspectives without privileging one lens over the other but there is much more to it than that! To learn more, go to:  
<http://www.integrativescience.ca/Principles/TwoEyedSeeing/>

## 5. Social Determinants of Health

- Income, employment, education, discrimination, racism, historical trauma, colonization, ceremony, culture, etc.

- **2 pages**



### DID YOU KNOW?

Two-Eyed Seeing was developed by Elder Albert Marshall from the Eskasoni First Nation.

# Detailed Research Proposal: Methodology

- Discussion of how research question was developed (also 1 page for Summary of Progress)
  - **1/2 page**

Sampling and Recruitment	Environmental Scan	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Ethical Considerations	Knowledge translation and Exchange
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sampling strategy and rationale</li><li>• Recruitment strategy; inclusion and exclusion criteria; different types of participants</li><li>• <b>1/2 page</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>1/4 page</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will different types of data be collected, from whom and by whom?</li><li>• <b>3/4 page</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will data be analyzed, synthesized?</li><li>• <b>1/2 page</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of how informed consent will be obtained, anonymity, storage and management of data</li><li>• <b>1 page</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of KTE strategy – discuss integrated KTE approach and end of grant KTE work</li><li>• <b>1 page</b></li></ul>

# Detailed Research Proposal: Expected Impacts

- What impact will your research have on Indigenous communities, Indigenous population specific to this research and the broader field of HIV research?
- How will your research be used? (e.g. significance of research focus)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  page

# Detailed Research Proposal: Our Research Team

CIHR research teams are made up of different kinds of researchers: **Investigators** (someone who is employed at an academic institution) and **Knowledge Users** (someone from community who will use research results). For a better understanding of these roles, you can check out our Roles and Responsibilities Fact Sheet or CIHR's [Glossary of Funding Related Terms](#).

Other things for consideration:

- Who is on the team and what skills, experience and passions do they bring?
- What are your team members' connection to your organization and to each other?

- **1 page**



# Appendices

- Here are some examples of the kinds of documents you might include in the appendices:
  - References cited
  - Research design schematic/flow chart
  - Project timeline/workplan
  - Draft recruitment materials, if applicable
  - Draft consent forms, if applicable
  - Draft data collection instruments
  - (Samples of arts based ‘data?’)

**Tip: Most CIHR appendices need to be 30 MB or less in order to upload to ResearchNet.**

An appendix (singular) or appendices (plural) appear at the end of your paper. This section contains additional information that is distracting in the body of your proposal but will give reviewers additional information. It is helpful to have separate appendices for distinct topics. **PLEASE NOTE:** reviewers can choose whether or not to review this information as part of their assessment of your proposal.

# Summary of Progress

- Sometimes, your research team will have already started work on some of the areas you wish to research, or your current application is building on another grant that you've already done. The Summary of Progress document gives reviewers an update.
- Or, if you've applied in the past and didn't get your grant, you may be required to describe how you've improved your proposal. It is always good to address the comments that your previous reviewers made, explaining how you took them into consideration – or why you did not.
- **1 page**



## Also Remember to Include...

- **Budget and Budget Justification** – explains how you plan to spend your money and why such expense are necessary to your project.
- **One Page Summary** – summarizes your entire proposal in one page. This should be written in plain language and just the highlights please!
- **Lay abstract (2000 characters)** this is a paragraph or two about your project and should be written in plain language
- **CBR Principles (1 page)** tells reviewers how you and your team will work together and with community over the course of your project.

# Bits and pieces

- **Relevance statements (2000 characters)** these are short descriptions that show reviewers that you are working with certain issues and communities in a good way.
  - Indigenous stream
  - Gender-based analysis (if applicable)
- **Letters of Support** are written from organizations or individuals that you work with. They often speak to the importance of the work that you are proposing, how this work will benefit theirs and that they are in full support of the ideas you are putting forward.
- **Letters of Collaboration** explain how team members / organizations will collaborate and contribute to the project, including financial and in-kind contributions. They should not be form letters.
- CVs and Attachments by all team members
- Can attach up to five relevant publications
  - May speak to methodology/approach used
  - May demonstrate expertise of team members
  - May demonstrate rationale or potential impact

# More bits and pieces ...

CIHR has a host of training modules that are only a click of your mouse away! Below, we've listed the ones that are most often required in CBR grants. Click [here](#) if you would like to check these and others out.

- **Sex and Gender Certificate:** CIHR now requires all researchers to complete an online training module in sex and gender. The training module should take approximately 40 minutes to complete. For more information and the module itself go to: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49347.html>
- **Ethics Certificate:** researchers may also be required to append a [CIHR Ethics certificate](#).
- **Demonstrated experience working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities:** For the Indigenous Stream, CIHR seeks applicants who self-identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit or Métis) and/or applicants who can demonstrate their experience working in an Indigenous Health Research environment, which may include Indigenous living experience, addressing power imbalances and cultural safety. Applicants seeking to be considered for the Indigenous Stream must therefore **submit a one (1) page attachment** describing how they meet this requirement.

# Formatting Guidelines

Be sure to check the formatting guidelines for *your* specific grant!

- Key formatting points:
  - Unless otherwise stated in application, submit **PDF attachments** to the ResearchNet site
  - Use 12 point font in black colour
  - Margins
    - Minimum: 2 cm (3/4 inch) around the page

**Tip: Use Garamond font – it is the smallest accepted font and gives you more writing room!**

# Good Luck!

If you have questions, or need support planning or writing a grant, please don't hesitate to contact the AHA Centre. We're here to help!

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