

2024 ESCN Systematic and Scoping Review Grant Competition

Call for Proposals

Background:

The Emergency Strategic Clinical Network (ESCN) Scientific Office was created to lead Alberta Health Services (AHS) in the promotion, adoption and diffusion of innovation as well as the creation and use of evidence to drive decision-making in emergency medicine. The SCN Scientific Offices pursue six pillars of activity:

1. Advancing Research Knowledge
2. Knowledge Translation
3. Research Facilitation
4. Engaging and Building Partnerships for Research and Innovation
5. Research Capacity Building and Training
6. Research Prioritization

The ESCN Scientific Office has identified several key activities that may support these pillars. One such activity includes the provision of research funding to support the completion of *high quality* literature reviews that address issues in emergency medicine.

The purpose of this funding call is to offer timely, relevant and scientifically rigorous evidence to emergency medicine decision-makers and knowledge-users in Alberta. In addition to achieving the goal of Building Research Capacity, this funding opportunity also serves to engage and collaborate with the network of academic researchers established by the ESCN Scientific Office. Further, this funding call supports the AHS Strategy for Clinical Health Research Innovation and Analytics which endorses partnerships with academic researchers at Alberta universities.

This competition will encourage the development of implementable and scalable ideas that will improve the quality of emergency medicine care delivery within the Health Quality Council of Alberta's six domains of quality: appropriateness, accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and acceptability. This competition will advance the ESCN Scientific Office's long-term research goals, which are aligned with the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences' performance indicators: (1) advancing knowledge; (2) capacity building; (3) informing decision making; (4) health impacts; and (5) broad economic and social impacts. Alignment with ESCN priority areas is also a review criteria. This competition will advance priorities of relevance to the ESCN mandate, particularly those related to the ESCN [Transformational Roadmap](#) or emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the degree to which proposed projects promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be considered in evaluation of all research project applications.



Consideration of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The following definitions are taken from the Government of Canada: Canada Research Coordinating Committee. 2020. Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research. <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx#6> Accessed October 2022.

“Equity is defined as the removal of systemic barriers and biases enabling all individuals to have equal opportunity to access and benefit from the program.

To achieve this, all individuals who participate in the research ecosystem must develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, racialized minorities, individuals from the LGBTQ2+ community) and put in place impactful measures to address these barriers.

Diversity is defined as differences in race, colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and age.

A diversity of perspectives and lived experiences is fundamental to achieving research and training excellence.

Inclusion is defined as the practice of ensuring that all individuals are valued and respected for their contributions and are equally supported.”

The Strategic Clinical Networks (SCNs) and Provincial Programs are collecting information to understand the demographic diversity of the applicants to our Scientific Office funding competitions. All SCNs and Provincial Programs are participating in this learning initiative. The data is anonymous; will not be linked to individuals; and will not be available for, or used in, determining funding competitions. The review proposal template includes a link to a diversity questionnaire.

Patient and Family Advisor Team Members

Patient and Family Advisors may be included as project team members. Groups which work to assist researchers in engaging Patient and Family Advisors include the Alberta Strategy for Patient Oriented Research SUPPORT Unit (<https://absporu.ca/>) and University of Calgary Patient and Community Engagement Research (PaCER) program (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/patient-community-engagement-research>).

Eligibility:

When considering proposals for literature reviews from applicants, the review process will consider the following criteria:

- The review team must be comprised of more than one individual and include a medical librarian;
- The review team must be comprised of at least one member with an MD or a PhD in a discipline relevant to emergency medicine (i.e., content knowledge);
- Past experience in conducting research relevant to emergency medicine;
- Past experience in conducting systematic or scoping literature reviews is essential.

Principal Investigators (PIs) may only hold one ESCN Systematic or Scoping Review award at a time; however, PIs may be co-investigators on multiple applications. PIs who received an ESCN systematic review grant in the previous year may not be funded as PIs this year, however they may be Co-Investigators.

Tasks to be performed

- 1) Clearly define the research question that is relevant to Emergency medicine in Alberta; examples may include areas of focus listed in the ESCN [Transformational Roadmap](#) or areas where knowledge synthesis is identified as a need by operational leaders within AHS. Please note that the Roadmap is being revised to include Equity as a priority.
- 2) Prepare a protocol and register the protocol on PROSPERO (Systematic Reviews only);
- 3) Conduct a search of the literature where information sources and search strategies are clearly described (including the grey literature) with the assistance of a trained medical librarian;
- 4) Employ strategies to mitigate publication and selection bias;
- 5) Describe and utilise a formal methodology for analyzing and summarizing the results;
- 6) Prepare a written report for the ESCN Scientific Office which documents the literature review and analysis including the research question, methodology and conclusions;

Funding

The maximum amount of a single award is \$15,000; however, lesser amounts and co-funding projects are encouraged. The maximum amount of funds available in this competition is \$45,000 (3 grants).

Funds must be expended within one year from the time they are made available and projects should be completed within this year. The time frame and associated expenses must be clearly justified in the budget. The grant is non-renewable.

Funding may be requested for:

- Stipend support for trainees or salary support for research associates and technical/professional assistants;
- Research operating expenses, including general office supplies and software;
- Other expenses will be considered, but must be justified.

Funding will **NOT** be provided for:

- Travel to conferences, meetings, symposia or presentations;
- Expenses incurred prior to implementation of the grant;
- Computer & equipment purchases;
- Principal Investigator salaries;
- Legal or patent fees, membership fees, academic fees, secretarial support.

Budget Review

The ESCN Scientific Director and Assistant Scientific Director will review the budget section of those proposals selected by the Review Panel to receive funding. Applicants may be asked to revise their proposed budgets at the discretion of the ESCN Scientific Director and / or Assistant Scientific Director in order to comply with funding program policies.

Reporting

Investigators are required to keep separate, accurate, and up-to-date accounts and records of the receipt and expenditure of the funding monies received, as well as all invoices, receipts and accounts and any other relevant documents relating to the expenditure of the funding. The ESCN Scientific Office will retain the right to review, at reasonable request, the accounts and records that relate to the expenditure of the funding and will have the right to hold copies of such accounts and records.

Investigators will be required to closely monitor the delivery and success of the project throughout the funding period to ensure that milestones are being met and deliverables are being provided. Investigators will provide the ESCN Scientific Office with a final report on completion of the funding period which will confirm whether the project has been successfully and properly completed.

All publications, including public messages, arising from this grant will acknowledge the support of the ESCN. The following statement should be included in the Acknowledgements section of the publication:

“Research reported in this publication was supported by the Alberta Health Services Emergency Strategic Clinical Network (ESCN). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the ESCN or Alberta Health Services”.

Timelines

October, 2023	Call for Scoping and Systematic Review Grant Applications
January 26, 2024	Applications Due
May 1, 2024	Award Start Date

Program Policies

1. Applicants may only apply once each year to the Review Grant Competitions as a Principal Applicant but may be a Co-Applicant on multiple applications.
2. PIs who received an ESCN systematic or scoping review grant in the previous year may not be funded as PIs this year; however, they may be Co-Investigators.
3. PIs must be affiliated with an Alberta-based academic institution.
4. Work on the review must be completed by team members working in Alberta.
5. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
6. Any unused funds at the end of the award term must be returned to the ESCN Scientific Office for use towards future research funding opportunities.
7. Failure to submit a final report within 6 months of completing the systematic review will disqualify the PI from future funding.

8. Important changes to the proposed study protocol must be reported to the ESCN Scientific Office immediately. If changes are deemed to be substantial departures from the original application, the grant may be closed and in this case the funds must be returned.
9. Reviews of reviews are eligible for funding in this competition.

Evaluation of Proposals

All submitted proposals will be reviewed and scored by members of an independent academic Review Panel according to 3 major criteria using a 5-point scale:

Criteria	Score
Expertise of the Investigative Team	
Academic track record and historical research productivity of the principal applicant.	/5
Skills and experience of the investigative team to conduct a systematic or scoping review (as appropriate to the application).	/5
Appropriate content knowledge of the topic to be reviewed by members of the investigative team.	/5
Quality of the Proposed Methods	
Background evidence to justify the review/demonstrate significance of the problem.	/5
Clarity of the research question.	/5
Scoping or systematic review is an appropriate way to address the research question.	/5
Appropriateness of search strategies, critical appraisal methodology (if applicable), and data collection/synthesis.	/5
Feasibility of the project (proposed work is accomplishable in the timeline given, literature exists on the subject to support a scoping or systematic review)	/5
Potential Impact for Emergency Medicine	
Alignment of proposed research with ESCN priority areas.	/5
Results have potential for knowledge translation or informing a next project.	/5
Potential to inform improvement in patient outcomes/policy development/health services delivery/health system efficiency and sustainability (as applicable) for emergency care within Alberta and beyond, considering the size and healthcare needs of the patient population to be impacted.	/5
The proposed study design includes appropriate consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion.	/5
Total	/60

Scoring: 5 = Outstanding 4 = Very Good 3 = Good 2 = Fair 1 = Poor NP = Not Provided

How to apply for funding

1. Systematic or Scoping review proposals will be limited to a maximum of 6 pages using the provided template (www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/scn/ahs-scn-ems-escn-review-proposal-template.docx) References and the Principal Investigator Bio Sketch are not included in the 6 page limit.
2. Appendices of up to 2 pages are allowed.
3. Applicants should conduct a preliminary search **and reference examples of the kinds of articles their review will include** in their application.
4. The Principal Investigator must submit a Bio Sketch using the template provided (no other Bio Sketches will be reviewed).
5. Complete budget details and justification must be included.
6. Email a PDF copy of the completed, signed application to:

Patrick McLane, PhD
Assistant Scientific Director
Emergency Strategic Clinical Network

emergency.scn@ahs.ca

cc: patrick.mclane@ahs.ca

In the subject line, write "**Principal Investigator Name** 2024 ESCN SR Grant Application."