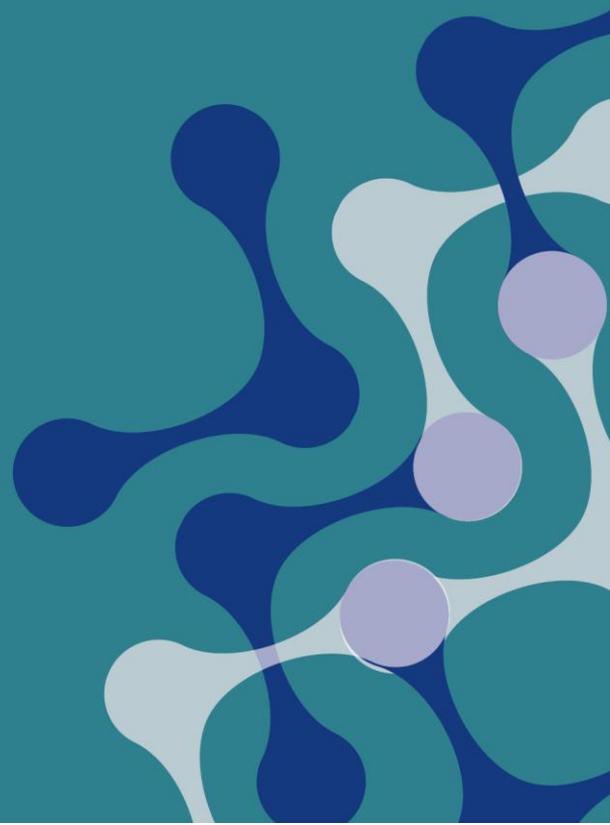


Office for Health and Medical Research

Medical Research Support Program

Application Guidelines & Program
Details

2024-2028



NSW Health

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www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

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www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

SHPN: (OHMR) 240211

Call for applications

NSW Health invites eligible organisations to apply for the 2024–2028 Medical Research Support Program (MRSP). This document provides information about the MRSP, application requirements and the submission process.

Purpose

The MRSP provides research infrastructure support funding to eligible independent medical research institutes. The program aims to develop statewide capacity to deliver world class health and medical research through the provision of this funding.

Objectives

The objectives of the MRSP are to:

- support excellence in health and medical research through the delivery of high-quality outputs
- promote critical mass in health and medical research as part of the effective use of resources
- monitor and help ensure the financial sustainability of participating institutes

Restrictions

MRSP funding is to be used for the indirect costs of research only. Funding may not be used to fund research projects or capital works. Funding may not be used to support activity where a statewide asset already exists (e.g. biobanking). Recipients will be required to report on expenditure to ensure funds are used for eligible purposes only.

Eligibility criteria

To receive funding from the MRSP, organisations must demonstrate that they meet **ALL** eligibility criteria.

1. Located in NSW

The applicant organisation must be located in NSW.

2. Health and medical research is the primary purpose of the organisation

Conducting health and medical research must be the primary purpose of the organisation. This does not exclude organisations that carry out other activities such as teaching and consultancy that are

secondary to the research function. It does, however, exclude organisations for which research is a subsidiary function, for example, pharmaceutical companies whose primary purpose is to manufacture and sell pharmaceuticals.

Evidence of the applicant's purpose may include its mission statement and annual reports.

3. Organisational independence

The applicant organisation must be a discrete organisational entity with independent management, governance and processes, demonstrated by:

- legal recognition of the organisation as a discrete operational entity
- an independent board or equivalent body that is not legally controlled by a university, local health district, specialty network, and/or a public or private health care facility
- organisational mechanisms to determine its own research direction and strategy, including a director with clear responsibilities regarding the organisation's research direction and activities
- identifiable infrastructure and overall organisational budgets, and control over how funds are spent, including externally audited financial statements
- an intellectual property policy that is congruent with the National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research (NHMRC, 2021)

4. Conducting high-quality research at sufficient scale

The applicant organisation must be conducting high-quality research at a sufficient scale, as demonstrated by an average annual income from eligible competitive grants of at least \$3 million over the period 2021–2023.

Nationally competitive health and medical research grants from the following sources are eligible for inclusion:

- Australian Research Council
- Cancer Australia
- Medical Research Future Fund
- National Health and Medical Research Council

Not all grants from these sources are eligible for inclusion. A grant is eligible only if it meets **all** the following criteria:

- Funds are provided on a nationally competitive basis.
- Funds are awarded for health and medical research.
- The scheme is advertised nationally and available to all Australian research organisations.
- The scheme has a well-defined mechanism for competition and selection by a qualified panel.

Additionally, the applicant institute must be responsible for the provision of infrastructure support for any research project claimed as eligible income. Grant recipients must report and be accountable to the applicant institute's director (or equivalent). Where a researcher's salary is paid by another organisation, a formal workplace agreement between the application institute and the researcher must be in place.

The Ministry of Health's decision on the eligibility of grants is final.

5. Financial viability

The applicant organisation must demonstrate financial viability with a liquidity ratio greater than 1.0 and a low level of debt. Applicants will be required to provide their most recent audited financial accounts as evidence of this.

Please note that as part of the application process, a responsible person from the organisation (Director, Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer or equivalent) will be required to sign a formal letter of declaration to:

- certify the accuracy of evidence provided to fulfil criteria 4 and 5
- agree to NSW Health exchanging information provided in the application with other NSW Government-funded research infrastructure programs.

MRSP funding is **NOT** available to:

- Affiliations of convenience – weakly affiliated research groups that represent themselves as a single entity solely for the purpose of meeting the eligibility criteria
- Organisations that facilitate research – research communities representing themselves as research organisations, hubs or consortia
- Controlled entities or units of other organisations – research groups that have, for

example, a university or health service as their parent entity.

Funding

Total funding of up to \$40 million per annum will be awarded over the four-year funding period (2024–2028). The approach for determining individual grant allocation is outlined below.

Allocation of funding

There will be two terms: Period 1 (2024–2026) and Period 2 (2026–2028). Funding allocations for Period 1 will be determined at the start of the Program. Allocations for Period 2 will be determined following a mid-term review in 2026.

In Period 1, the fixed pool of funding will be shared between eligible applicants based on their average annual NHMRC income in the preceding three years (2021–2023) and their tier allocation. Institutes will be allocated to tiers based on average annual eligible competitive grant income as follows:

- Tier 1: ≥ \$15 million
- Tier 2: ≥ \$10 million
- Tier 3: ≥ \$3 million

Institutes in higher tiers will receive a higher rate of support. To ensure the total funding allocation fits within the fixed funding pool, it is anticipated that this will result in rates of support in the range of 25 to 45 cents per NHMRC grant dollar.

Applicant organisations will be required to disclose whether they receive or expect to receive any other NSW Government infrastructure funding during the MRSP funding period (2024–2028). This will be taken into account when allocating MRSP funds. MRSP allocations may also be adjusted if a successful applicant also receives funding from:

- Prevention Research Support Program
- Cancer Institute NSW infrastructure funding programs
- Other NSW Government infrastructure funding programs

NSW Health acknowledges that applicant organisations will attract additional research infrastructure funding from non-NSW Government sources such as affiliated universities or Commonwealth government programs. Payments

from the MRSP will not be affected by funding from these sources.

Payments from the MRSP will be made directly to successful applicant organisations. During Period 1 (2024–2026) participating institutes will receive two equal instalments based on the initial payment determination. In Period 2 (2026–2028), institutes will receive a further two payments based on the assessment at the mid-term review.

Reporting requirements

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with NSW Health that sets out the obligations of both parties and contains a schedule of reporting requirements. These will require that applicants:

- continue to meet the eligibility criteria throughout the program and report any changes that might have an impact on their eligibility
- use funding provided by the MRSP within NSW and for research infrastructure purposes only
- provide annual audited financial accounts and financial accountability reports to demonstrate expenditure of funds and ongoing viability
- provide annual reports on research activity at the times and in the format set out by NSW Health
- produce a research translation plan and report progress made against this plan
- provide any other information reasonably required by NSW Health in relation to the MRSP, including relevant information on environmental sustainability
- participate in a mid-term review
- agree to all information provided in support of MRSP applications being subject to external audit, including where required, relevant affiliated employee workplace agreements.

Selection process

Step 1: Initial eligibility appraisal

Following the closing date for applications, the Office for Health and Medical Research (OHMR) will make an appraisal as to whether each applicant has satisfied all eligibility criteria. OHMR may request further information from applicants to clarify or confirm material contained in the application.

Step 2: Independent review of applications

An independent review panel will review OHMR's initial appraisal. The panel will be chaired by the Executive Director, OHMR and include the Chief Financial Officer, NSW Health and three independent members, including one interstate member.

Step 3: Recommendation to Minister

The panel will make a recommendation to the Minister for Medical Research on which applicants should enter the program and the proposed funding allocation for Period 1.

Step 4: Successful applicants announced

Once the Minister has made a decision, all applicants will be informed in writing of the result. This decision is final; no further correspondence will be entered into.

Step 5: Funding agreements initiated

OHMR will make contact with successful applicants to establish funding agreements.

How to submit an application

All applications must be submitted using the application kit available on the NSW Health website: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/medical-research-support-program/.

Valid applications must include:

- a completed Standard Application Form, with all supporting documentation included as separate, clearly labelled files
- a completed Grant Income Spreadsheet
- a copy of the applicant organisation's most recent audited financial statement
- a signed Letter of Declaration

Completed applications should be sent to **MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au** by **5pm Wednesday 17th July**. Incomplete applications and/or applications received after this time will not be considered.

Questions about the application process

Questions about the application process may be directed to the Office for Health and Medical Research at **MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au**.