



SEED GRANTS: PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Background

TRANSFORM Heart Failure is an interdisciplinary strategic research network that was formed to confront the staggering health, economic, and societal burdens and disparities that exist in access to high-quality heart failure care. New approaches and models of care are needed, with promising indications that technological advances in digital medicine and remote healthcare monitoring will enable proactive, personalized, and decentralized solutions that also empower patients to become more active in their own health.

Our initiative fosters collaboration and integration of various disciplinary research and training approaches: technology innovation and implementation, basic science, heart failure medicine, data analytics and artificial intelligence, health technology assessment, Indigenous health, and engagement of people with lived experience. Together, we aim to create both a translational pipeline of innovative approaches and an interdisciplinary community sharing a mindset and commitment to implement these solutions in a respectful and collaborative fashion appropriate to diverse communities and values.

Seed Grants

TRANSFORM HF is offering seed grants to encourage, foster, and support members of our community working collaboratively on research and project proposals that align with our initiative's goals and approaches.

For 2021, three \$50,000 grants are available, each with a unique focus theme and opportunity for investigation:

1. Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in heart failure.
2. Data science innovation in heart failure prevention, treatment, or care.
3. Digital health and heart failure (including virtual health, point-of-care testing, implantables, sensors, wearables and apps).

Funding is planned to begin January 2022 for one year, however this timeline may need to be adjusted if COVID-19 restrictions delay the submission and review processes. Funds must be spent by December 31, 2022.

Application requirements

Please complete the Application Form available on the TRANSFORM HF website under [Opportunities](#).

In their submission, applicants must briefly describe their project, theme, collaborators and its potential impact on the health outcomes and quality of life of people living with heart failure. Applications must bring together a diversity of perspectives and disciplines in developing digital health innovations and projects/proposals.

Applicants must be investigators affiliated with TRANSFORM HF and the University of Toronto and/or the institutions within the Toronto Academic Health Science Network. Eligible applicants

include all professorial staff eligible to hold research funding at the [University of Toronto](#) or [external funding partners](#).

Themes of research proposal

Applicants must indicate which research theme(s) applies to their proposal. Proposals will be evaluated by research theme. It is anticipated that one grant will be awarded for each theme. Applicants should prioritize the most relevant theme to their proposal to ensure the greatest opportunity for success.

Theme 1: Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in heart failure.

Explore and address health inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including urban Indigenous communities, racialized communities, or other underrepresented communities of individuals. Research will specifically include and promote an inclusive, culturally-safe, and meaningful engagement with underrepresented or other groups inequitably affected by heart failure and poorer health outcomes and quality of life. See U of T's VPRI [website](#) for definitions and resources on the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research and innovation.

Theme 2: Data science innovation in heart failure prevention, treatment, or care.

Leverage data science and statistical techniques (e.g., data mining, data visualization, artificial intelligence and machine learning) using large and complex data sets to enable precise exploration and analysis of the genetic, developmental, behavioural, contextual, environmental, and societal factors of heart health and well-being for individuals and populations.

Theme 3: Digital health and heart failure.

Explore the digital transformation of heart failure prevention, diagnosis, and care, including the role of technologies such as virtual care, remote monitoring, smart wearables, apps, and data platforms. Develop and apply digital health solutions that promote data-based heart failure diagnostic and treatment decisions, therapeutics, remote monitoring and self-management, and person-centered care as well as health system design and delivery.

Additional considerations for collaboration/project/research proposal development

Regardless of the research theme, teams are encouraged to incorporate sex and gender-based analysis and reporting, patient and community engagement, Indigenous knowledges and research methods, and equity, diversity, and inclusion into their projects as appropriate. Such considerations are integral to realizing the vision of TRANSFORM HF, which is built upon a foundation of diversity, health equity, and inclusion.

Sex and gender-based analysis and reporting

Applicants are required to integrate sex and gender-based analysis (SGBA) in their project or research design. Any application that does not incorporate SGBA must provide a rationale why it would not be relevant to the project. All applicants are strongly encouraged to complete CIHR's Institute of Gender and Health training modules: [Online Training Modules](#).

Patient and community engagement

TRANSFORM HF is committed to engaging patients in their care and in decision-making to improve the quality and safety of care across the hospital. Applicants are required to illustrate

how they intend to meaningfully engage patients in their project. Any application that does not engage patients must provide a rationale why it would not be relevant. TRANSFORM HF can support recruitment of patients, caregivers and family members if the applicant does not have access.

Community-oriented initiatives must ensure community engagement in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health programs and technologies. In particular, projects involving Indigenous organizations and communities must develop meaningful relationships with Indigenous people and communities, ensuring a sense of accountability, reflexive allyship, and “an ability to step aside and allow Indigenous people to lead.”¹

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Applicants must illustrate how their project will align with and potentially advance TRANSFORM HF’s commitment to EDI whether in the composition of the research team, EDI training of research team members, or the consideration of EDI in research/project design. For more information, consult the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion resources](#) available through U of T’s Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation.

Application Submission

Please submit the completed [Application Form](#) by **November 29, 2021 at 5:00pm EST** as a single PDF document via email to info@transformhf.ca.

Applicants are asked to complete an anonymous survey to ensure that our programs include considerations for EDI. The questions are voluntary and the information collected will not be used to evaluate any individual or application. It will be collected and held in the Office of the Director of EDI within VPRI U of T and shared as de-identified, aggregated information to inform TRANSFORM HF’s reporting and best practices.

Consult the [TRANSFORM HF website](#) for further information or contact Anne Simard, Director of Strategy and Translation at anne.simard@uhn.ca with any questions.

Receipt of complete/on-time submissions will be acknowledged. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission by January 14, 2022.

Successful applicants may be featured in TRANSFORM HF communications and reporting, and additional supports to the collaboration may be available as it progresses.

¹ Hyett S, Marjerrison, S, Gabel, C. Improving health research among Indigenous Peoples in Canada. CMAJ 2018 May 22;190:E616-21. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.171538.