

2026 COLLABORATION STARTER GRANTS: PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Applications due February 1, 2026 at 11:59PM EST

TRANSFORM HF BACKGROUND

TRANSFORM HF is an initiative formed in partnership between the University of Toronto and the Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research to address the grand challenge of inequity in heart failure care. The initiative's mission is to enable equitable, person-centred care by developing, translating, and implementing innovative digital health solutions. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and responsible design, TRANSFORM HF propels cutting-edge research into real-world impact— preventing, managing, and transforming the lived experience of heart failure.

Consult the TRANSFORM HF [website](#) for more information and to view [past Collaboration Starter Grant winners](#).

COLLABORATION STARTER GRANTS

TRANSFORM HF is once again offering Collaboration Starter Grants (CSGs) to support our members in forming collaborations with **new partners** – either within or outside the TRANSFORM HF network – on **early-stage projects** that advance our mission. We welcome applications that are innovative, responsible, community-centered, interdisciplinary, and translational.

Three categories of supports are available:

- Grants up to \$10K for proposal development meetings, collaborative project activities, and patient or Knowledge Keeper compensation¹.
- Grants up to \$10K for preliminary project research and data collection.
- Grants up to \$10K for research proposal writing and editing.

The total number of grants, distribution across categories, and individual award funding amounts will be dependent upon the mix and quality of applications received.

Funding will be reserved for at least **one** CSG that seeks to explore opportunities in alignment with TRANSFORM HF's *Horizon Principles*:

1. Wholistic Health: Solutions that see the whole person, not just the condition.
2. Global Reach: Breakthroughs that benefit people everywhere – not just in our backyard.

Funding will begin in April 2026 and must be spent by April 30, 2027.

¹ We encourage applicants to review the Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research [Patient Appreciation Policy](#) for a guide on suggested compensation rates.

ELIGIBILITY

No applicant involved with a current incomplete CSG will be considered for new funding (i.e., funds not spent or work still in progress).

Primary applicants must be investigators or trainees affiliated with the University of Toronto and/or the institutions within the Toronto Academic Health Science Network.

Primary applicants must be members of TRANSFORM HF. Prospective applicants can become a member of the network by completing a short [membership form](#) in advance of submission.

Primary applicants who have previously been awarded CSGs in a primary applicant role are not eligible to hold 2026 CSG funds.

The applicant team must be a new research partnership. This means that the majority of team members have not previously worked together in a research capacity OR are exploring new avenues of research outside their previous collaborations with the addition of new partners.

The proposed project must be in the early stages of development. Applications for proposed research in execution/analysis/dissemination phases will not be considered for funding.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Description of Partnership

Applications must describe how the research team brings together a diversity of perspectives and disciplines. Further, applications should explain how the collaboration came about and confirm that the majority of the team has not worked together in a research capacity before.

Project Overview & Budget

Applicants must describe their project, planned activities with associated timelines, and justification for how the CSG funds will be used.

Alignment to TRANSFORM HF

Applicants must describe how their proposed project aligns with TRANSFORM HF's mission, principles, and research focus areas. Please see Appendix I to learn more about our research focus areas and core principles.

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be reviewed by a panel against consistent criteria.

Category	Criteria
Feasibility	• Is the methodology appropriate? • Is the timeline realistic? • Are the funds eligible and allocated clearly and appropriately?
Team Strength	• Does the team bring combined research excellence? • Does the team unite a diversity of perspectives? • Does the team introduce new partners to expand the TRANSFORM HF network?
Alignment to TRANSFORM HF	• How does the proposed work align with TRANSFORM HF's mission? • How does the proposed work align with TRANSFORM HF's core principles? • Does the proposed work integrate a TRANSFORM HF horizon principle?
Novelty & Innovation	• Is the project novel, pursuing new dimensions of one of our research areas of focus? • Are the methods, approaches, and/or outputs advancing digital health innovation?
Potential Impact	• Is the work relevant? • Are concrete, measurable, and significant outputs outlined? • Is there a realistic and actionable plan to move the research forward beyond the CSG?

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

1. Complete the [online submission form](#) by February 1, 2026 at 11:59PM EST. Please note that the online form may not save your responses if you refresh or close the page. We encourage you to draft your answers in our [2026 CSG Application Form Template](#) first.
2. Primary applicants are asked to complete an [anonymous survey](#) to ensure that our programs include considerations for EDI. The questions are voluntary. The information collected will not be used to evaluate any individual or application; it will be held at TRANSFORM HF and shared internally as de-identified, aggregated information to inform our reporting and best practices.

Receipt of complete/on-time submissions will be acknowledged. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Applicants will be notified in March 2026.

APPENDIX I: TRANSFORM HF OVERVIEW

Mission

TRANSFORM HF advances equitable, person-centred heart failure care by developing, translating, and implementing innovative digital health solutions. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and responsible design, we propel cutting-edge research into real-world impact—preventing, managing, and transforming the lived experience of heart failure.

Research Focus Areas

Wearables and Diagnostic Sensors

We advance next-generation biosensors and diagnostic technologies that make health monitoring seamless in daily life. Our network develops wearable devices and lab-on-a-chip tools that detect changes in heart function early, from fluid buildup to irregular rhythms. By enabling timely diagnosis and empowering people to manage their health at home, these innovations help reduce strain on hospitals while supporting safe, independent living.

Machine Learning and AI

We harness artificial intelligence and machine learning to transform complex health data into actionable insights. We build and validate predictive models that anticipate health events, personalize treatment, and guide providers in making better decisions. With an emphasis on fairness and transparency, we ensure these tools empower patients, equip clinicians, and keep equity at the center of digital health innovation.

Remote Monitoring and Management

We design patient-centered platforms that enable continuous health tracking beyond the clinic walls. These systems connect patients and providers in real time, enabling proactive interventions before symptoms worsen. By bringing healthcare closer to home, remote care reduces unnecessary hospital visits, eases the travel burden for rural and remote communities, and offers peace of mind and better quality of life for people living with heart failure.

Sustainable Digital Health

We embed environmental responsibility into digital health innovation, ensuring solutions support both human and planetary health. We advance projects that focus on energy-efficient data infrastructures, sustainable device lifecycles, and circular design principles that reduce waste. Linking climate health with patient care, we create systems that are effective, equitable, and resilient.

Models of Care and Digital Health Implementation

We work to bridge the gap between promising research and everyday practice. By co-developing digital health solutions with clinicians, patients, and communities, we ensure technologies align with real-world needs and workflows. Our goal is to help innovations move from pilot projects to sustained adoption at a pace that keeps up with patient and system needs, scaling equitably across diverse health systems.

Indigenous Heart Health

Guided by Indigenous partners and First Nation communities, we co-create digital health solutions that are culturally safe and community-driven. As allies and partners, our work is

responsive to community priorities and progresses in respect of Indigenous knowledge systems and practices. By building capacity and partnerships, we aim to ensure that digital innovation is both innovative and responsive to the unique priorities of Indigenous peoples.

Core Principles

Innovative

We champion bold ideas and new technologies that challenge the status quo and accelerate breakthroughs in heart failure care.

Responsible

We believe responsible innovation means building equitable, culturally safe, and climate-conscious solutions that strengthen—not strain or divide.

Patient- and Community-Centered

We connect lived experience with research excellence to co-create solutions that reflect real needs and improve lives.

Interdisciplinary

We recognize that grand challenges call for grand solutions – cutting across disciplines, sectors, and experience.

Translational

We get great ideas out of the lab, accelerating the pace of innovation to ensure solutions get into the hands of those who need them *when* they need them.

Horizon Principles

Wholistic Health

We seek to build solutions that see the whole person, not just the condition.

Global Reach

We want to see our breakthroughs benefit people everywhere, not just in our own backyard.