



## Notice of Changes: Charlies Foundation for Research Grant Programs

The Department of Research is reforming our processes for the grant programs funded by the Charlies Foundation for Research (CFR). We have reviewed our grants process and worked closely with the Foundation to identify how we can improve the effectiveness, fairness, transparency, and accessibility for these grant programs.

The vision of the CFR is *enabling quality patient-centred research to inspire better patient care and health outcomes*. They generously fund several grant programs annually for research at the Sir Charles Gairdner Osborne Park Health Care Group (SCGOPHCG), including the:

**Bright Ideas Grant** – Previously, up to \$5,000 to foster new and emerging talent.

**Discovery Grant** – Up to \$30,000 to support breakthrough ideas.

**Transformational Grant** – Up to \$100,000 for truly remarkable advancements in medical care.

They also facilitate other additional grants and funding annually, such as the *Ray Florence Shaw grant program* for ophthalmology and cardiovascular research, and the *Peter Thompson prize* as an additional \$10,000 for the highest scored mid-range (\$30,000) grant application.

The priorities for CFR in supporting research through these grant programs are:

- Supporting new and innovative research ideas, focused on the prevention of disease, the relief of suffering and improved patient outcomes.
- Growing research capacity, particularly by supporting early career researchers to gain experience and momentum with their research in order to secure future larger grants from peak research funding bodies.
- Supporting translational research, with the greatest potential for research impact and improvements in patient care and health outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant challenges and restrictions to the health care sector, that inevitably impacted our ability to undertake research. In response to this, the grant process (particularly, with regards to grant extensions) were relaxed. This has led to increased strain on



resources and complexity in facilitating and planning for these grant programs. Furthermore, review of the grant process this year has highlighted several areas in which we can improve our processes, provide more support and a better experience for researchers, and re-align these grant program.

## GRANT PROGRAMS

Changes to the CFR grant programs offered for the 2024/25 financial year are as follows:

### 1. **Bright Idea Grant (BIG) program**

- a. The duration for the BIGs will remain at 12 months; however, the value will be increased to **up to \$10,000** for each grant. Applicants are still able and encouraged to apply for a smaller value, if they do not need the full amount.

### 2. **Mid-range grants** (\$30,000 - *Discovery* and *Ray Florence Shaw (RFS) grants*)

- a. The duration of these grant programs will be increased to **14 months** for the 2024/25 financial year on a trial basis.

### 3. **Major grants** (\$100,000 – *Transformational grant*)

- a. Given the significant changes to the CFR grant programs this year, Transformational grants will not be offered for the 2024/25 financial year.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Commercial research projects (such as clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, or other research with a commercial benefit to a third-party) are not eligible for CFR grant programs.
2. Researchers can secure a CFR grant in the 2024/25 financial year if they have no more than one active CFR grant of that category.
  - a. The grant categories are:
    - i. **BIG program** – up to \$10,000
    - ii. **Mid-range grant programs** (*Discovery, RFS grants*) – up to \$30,000
    - iii. **Major grant programs** (*Transformational grant*) – up to \$100,000
  - b. Please note that this change may affect some researchers who currently have multiple grants, or who have/are seeking grant extensions for their current grant projects. With the changes to grant extensions outlined below – this is unlikely to impact most researchers beyond the 2024/25 financial year.





- i. **Example:** If you have two active mid-range grants (e.g., a *RFS* and *Discovery grant*) you are not eligible to secure a 2024/25 mid-range grant as the Coordinating Principal Investigator (CPI). This also includes grant projects that have been granted extensions from the formerly named *Mid-Range Grant Program (MRGP)* and *RAC grants*.
  - ii. **Example:** If you have one BIG that expires in October 2024, you are still eligible to apply for and secure a BIG for the 2024/25 financial year.
3. Applicants are limited to being the CPI (i.e., the grant holder) for **one application only per round**. However, this limitation does not restrict involvement as a Principal Investigator (PI) or associate on other applications. This means that for 2024/25:
  - a. **Grant Funding Round 1: Mid-range grant programs**
    - i. Applicants can submit one application only for either the *Discovery* or the *RFS grant* in this round.
  - b. **Grant Funding Round 2: BIG program**
    - i. Applicants can submit one application for a *BIG* in this round.
  - c. If subsequent additional grant rounds are offered later in the financial year (e.g. an additional round of BIGs), applicants again may submit one application for this round, provided they meet the criteria listed above (number 2.)
4. Applicants will need to provide a copy of their Good Clinical Practice (GCP) certification (which is valid for 3 years) for all grant program submissions.
  - a. GCP certification is mandated for clinical trials in Australia and is applicable to all human research. The Department of Research recognises the importance of GCP training and supports grant applications adhering to this standard.
  - b. This qualification is free for WA Health employees through the Western Australian Health Translation Network (WAHTN) Research Education and Training (RET) Program (found [here](#)). It is expected to take 4.5 hours to complete your initial certification, or 90 minutes for your refresher course.
5. Researchers who held (or currently hold) a CFR grant in 2024 need to be up to date with their project reports to be eligible to receive a new CFR grant in 2024/25.
  - a. Please note that these reports have been a longstanding requirement of the Research Grant Agreement (RGA) for CFR grants. These reports are collated and shared with



the CFR and are used to monitor the research impact and utility of these grant programs, and to grow our capacity to conduct and support research.

- b. The current requirements for reporting are:
  - i. **BIG program** – a final report at the conclusion of the grant.
  - ii. **Mid-range and major grant programs** – a progress report half-way through your grant duration, and a final report at the conclusion of the grant.
- c. **FOR RESEARCHERS WHO HOLD/HELD A CFR GRANT IN 2024:**

Forms to complete these reports will be on the Department of Research website and should be emailed to [scgh.researchgrants@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:scgh.researchgrants@health.wa.gov.au). If you are unsure about your reporting requirements, or if we have received your report, please contact us as soon as possible.

  - i. If your reports are not up to date by the time application scores are finalised, **your application will not be eligible to receive a 2024/25 CFR grant.**
- d. Recipients of a 2024/25 CFR grant will be required to submit their reports for these projects through REDCap. Researchers will receive a notification email when these reports are due, and the link to complete the report.

## RESEARCH GRANT AGREEMENT

The process for the Research Grant Agreement (RGA) will be as follows:

1. For the 2024/25 Grant Funding Program Rounds 1 & 2, outcomes for these grants are expected to be announced in October 2024.
2. Successful applicants will be sent a grant award letter (with the funding amount) and a RGA.
  - a. The letter and RGA will specify the date from which researchers can access their grant funding, and an expiry date. The expiry date will be 12 months (BIG) or 14 months (mid-range grants) from the date that the grant can be accessed.
3. Researchers will need to complete and return the RGA to the Department of Research within 1 month. If not completed within this time, the grant award is liable to be withdrawn.

## GRANT EXTENSIONS

Grant extension approvals will be significantly reduced going forward. Grant holders are encouraged to engage with the Department of Research early in their grant duration if they have concerns



regarding delays in approvals for their projects or feasibility of project completion within the grant duration. The Department of Research will prioritise (where appropriate) and support CFR grant recipients with their projects, however we expect researchers to be:

1. **Proactive, engaged, and responsive regarding their grant projects.** It is expected that researchers will submit the required paperwork to progress ethics or site approvals in a timely fashion.
2. **Have realistic expectations and project timelines** for what can be achieved within the allocated grant duration. If you are unsure, consider discussing this with your research colleagues or contacting our Research Navigators for some advice.
3. **Be prepared and committed to start your project if you are successful with your grant application.** If you don't think you have the time or resources to undertake the project currently, consider applying for later grant rounds or ensure you have a robust research team with the time, knowledge, and resources to do this research with you.

For current CFR grant holders, **new requests for extensions will be reserved for extenuating circumstances only** and considered on a case-by-case basis. Extensions beyond 6 months will not be accepted.

Going forward, for the CFR 2024/25 grant programs:

1. **BIG program**
  - a. A single extension will be allowed for publication costs only, provided there is remaining funding available. No extensions will otherwise be granted, barring extenuating circumstances.
2. **Mid-range grants** (*Discovery and RFS grants*)
  - a. The duration of these grants will be increased to 14-months. No extensions will be granted for these grant programs, barring extenuating circumstances.

These changes have been made in consultation with the CFR. We firmly believe that these changes will improve the grant process and experience and ensure that these grants are focused on supporting new patient-centred research and innovative ideas within the SCGOPHCG.





Government of **Western Australia**  
North Metropolitan Health Service  
Sir Charles Gairdner Osborne Park Health Care Group



Please contact the SCGOPHCG Department of Research if you have any questions or concerns regarding these changes, your current CFR grant or future grant applications.

### The SCGOPHCG Department of Research

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