ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS EARLY INTERVENTION INNOVATION FUND

Round 2

AOD INNOVATION GRANT SCHEME GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

NSW
GOVERNMENT

Contents

Call for Applications – Alcohol and Other Drugs Innovation Grants Scheme Round 2

NSW Health invites applications for Round 2 of the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Innovation Grants Scheme by:

1. Non-government organisations (NGOs) OR
2. Local Health Districts (LHDs), Specialty Health Networks (SHNs), the Ambulance Service of NSW or NSW Health Pathology WITH NGO partners.

Further information on the Innovation Grants Scheme is available at
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/Pages/default.aspx.

For queries regarding the scheme, email aodgrants@moh.health.nsw.gov.au.

Application and selection process

The process will include two stages:

1. Expressions of Interest (EOI)
2. Full application development

Submission of Applications

All applications must be completed using the forms available at
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/Pages/default.aspx. See below for submission dates.

All EOIs and Full Applications must be emailed to aodgrants@moh.health.nsw.gov.au.

Expressions of Interest and attachments must be received by COB 27 October 2017.

Full Applications and attachments must be received by COB 13 April 2018.

Key dates

STAGE	ACTIVITY	DATE
Stage 1	Expressions of interest open	August 2017
	Information sessions	September 2017
	Expressions of interest close	COB 27 October 2017
	AOD Review Panel assessment period	November 2017 – December 2017
	All applicants notified of outcome of EOI	2 February 2018
Stage 2	Full application development	5 February 2018 – 13 April 2018
	Full applications close	COB 13 April 2018
	IGS Selection Panel assessment period	April – May 2018
	Applicants advised of outcome of full application	June 2018
	Funding Agreement executed	July 2018

Round 2 of the NGO Evaluation Grant Scheme is open simultaneously for application. This fund invites NGOs to apply for funding to evaluate existing programs to build the evidence base. Further details about the NGO Evaluation Grant Scheme are available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/Pages/default.aspx.

Guidelines for Applicants

Introduction

In 2016/2017 the NSW Government increased funding by $75 million over four years to tackle drug misuse in our communities. This package of investment focuses on supporting more young people, more people into treatment and more families.

The Early Intervention Innovation Fund is part of the NSW Drug Package and is $8 million over four years. It aims to help build the evidence base for early intervention models to support people at risk, with a particular focus on young people who are vulnerable to using drugs or are already participating in risky drug use.

The Fund comprises two Grants Schemes:

1. NGO Evaluation Grant Scheme – for NGOs in the AOD sector to evaluate existing programs to build the evidence base.

2. AOD Innovation Grant Scheme (AOD IGS; this guideline) – for NGOs and partners to specifically drive AOD innovation, with a particular focus on young people who are vulnerable to using drugs or are already participating in risky drug use.

Grants are available to staff within NGOs OR NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs), Ambulance Service of NSW, Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) and NSW Health Pathology, with an NGO Partner. Funding will be provided for projects that will translate into better patient outcomes, improve the delivery of health services and population health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on early intervention innovation and young people who are vulnerable to using drugs or already using drugs.

For the AOD IGS, host organisations will be invited to submit up to 2 applications only.

Host organisations are required to carefully consider the applications that are submitted, and encouraged only to submit those that reflect the intent of the Fund and are of a high standard. Host organisations need to ensure they can support the implementation of results if successful.

Purpose and objectives

The overarching purpose of the AOD Innovation Grant Scheme is to harness the innovation and evaluation capacity within the AOD sector to improve the health system, patient outcomes, population health and wellbeing in NSW, to drive early intervention innovation and to focus on young people who are vulnerable to using drugs or are already participating in risky drug use. The scheme aims to incentivise projects that are a priority for the State or articulated in local strategic research plans and to support translation into policy and practice.

The Innovation Grant Scheme intends to:

1. Foster the generation of high quality and rigorous research which is directly relevant to clinical, health service and population health practice in NSW. The scheme supports:

   ■ projects that have demonstrated sufficient evidence and background, or strong rationale based on theory and practice, to justify the project proposed

   ■ rigorous research with appropriate design which aligns with the research question

   ■ the following example types of research (which must be supported by a rigorous methodology); randomised control trials, pragmatic clinical trials, evaluations, implementation science, translational research, health services research, population health research, and proof of concept studies

   ■ identifying and piloting innovative new service delivery approaches to respond to AOD issues. Approaches should be client centred and based on existing evidence or "practice wisdom".

2. Support projects that have the potential to be translated into policy and practice. The research proposal must be supported by a robust knowledge translation/implementation plan. Such projects include:

   ■ research that is translatable: that is, research that can be generalised and scaled across other NGOs/LHDs/SHN or across the state or for broader implementation e.g. for technology based interventions.

   ■ translation research: that is, projects which examine how to more effectively apply best practice in models of care.

3. Reduce the time from evidence generation to practice implementation. The scheme supports projects with a governance framework:

   ■ to guide the research project and drive knowledge translation

   ■ to ensure existing evidence and policy is implemented

   ■ which facilitates engagement with key stakeholders who would help to drive both the project and implementation of results, if successful

   ■ which encourages engagement with key policy makers, networks, health system administrators and practitioners to ensure the proposed research is effective.

4. Enhance health and medical research capability and capacity within the alcohol and other drug service system.

5. Drive collaboration and practice change that improves health outcomes. The scheme supports meaningful collaborations that support the above.

Details of funding

These grants are for $50,000 to $1 million for projects of one to two years duration.

The funding may be used for costs associated with the research project and translation activities, including a small amount of research administration costs for NGOs only, but cannot be directed towards non-NGO research administration costs, capital works, general maintenance costs, general telephone/communication systems (unless integral to the innovation), basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities.

Research and implementation partners

Host organisations will need to identify and engage relevant partners who are essential for the effective delivery of the research project and implementation of the outcomes in NSW. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other organisations to assist with generalisability of the findings. Applicants will be required to explain if this approach is not considered appropriate for the project.

These partners may include other NGOs, consumers, internal cross-disciplinary partners or external organisations including other NGOs, the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA), universities, medical research institutes, NSW Health Pillars (Agency for Clinical Innovation, Clinical Excellence Commission, Health Education and Training Institute, Bureau of Health Information), the NSW Ministry of Health, and LHDs/SHNs/Ambulance Service of NSW, Research Hubs, relevant clinical networks, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and primary health networks. Where the project is likely to impact any of these groups or their policy, an appropriate partner must be included on the project Steering Committee.

Knowledge translation

The Scheme aims to generate high impact research and evaluation that is directly relevant to clinical, health service and population health practice in NSW and to ensure the translation of these findings into policy and practice. The Scheme aims to support meaningful co-production of the research and the early identification of activities that will move the findings along the translation continuum, including scaling up the findings across a system or to other settings.

Partner engagement should occur throughout the project and follow through to knowledge translation, for example:

1. **Prior to and during research** key policy and practice partners must be included in the development of the research question and participate in relevant stages of the process including translation activities, such as:

   ■ Co-production of the research
   ■ Presentations of findings
   ■ Publication of findings in policy- or practice-relevant formats
   ■ Identifying steps required to change practice.

2. **At the completion** of the project applicants and key partners in the host organisation will need to continue to follow through with planned translation activities. Applicants will need to consider how they will measure the success of their knowledge translation activities and the uptake of the findings into practice, noting that one or more Chief Executive/s (or equivalent) will be required to certify that practice change will be implemented in the host organisation and any partner NGOs/LHDs/host organisations (see Section F in the Expression of Interest form).

Applicants may find the following useful in considering the development of program logic and knowledge translation activities:

Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence. *Developing and Using Program Logic: A Guide. Evidence and Evaluation Guidance Series*, Population and Public Health Division. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health, 2017. http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/Publications/developing-program-logic.pdf

Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence. Milat AJ, Newson R, and King L. *Increasing the scale of population health interventions: A guide. Evidence and Evaluation Guidance Series*, Population and Public Health Division. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health, 2014. http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/Pages/scalability-guide.aspx

Ruppertsberg AI, Ward V, Ridout A, Foy R. The development and application of audit criteria for assessing knowledge exchange plans in health research grant applications. *Implementation Science* 2014;9:93.

Eligibility criteria

Project eligibility criteria for the Innovation Grants Scheme

1. The project must be conducted in NSW, within an NGO,[1] OR LHD, SHN, the Ambulance Service of NSW, or NSW Health Pathology WITH an NGO partner/s.

2. The 'host organisation' for the project must be an NGO OR LHD, SHN, the Ambulance Service of NSW or NSW Health Pathology or NSW Health with an NGO partner (see criteria below for 'host organisation').

The project must directly align with the strategic plan of the host organisation, Premier's priorities or state priorities, or it must focus on prevention, early intervention, harm reduction or aftercare/relapse prevention.

Premier's priorities include:

- protecting our kids
- reducing domestic violence
- reducing youth homelessness.

State priorities include:

- keeping people healthy by providing information, education and referrals, enhancing harm reduction, providing support for carers and cross government priorities
- delivering accessible and integrated care by identifying and responding to people with AOD concerns to enable early intervention and access to ongoing treatment, improving access to non-discriminatory specialist treatment, and delivering accessible and coordinated care for people with multiple and complex needs.

The priority population for this scheme is young people who are vulnerable to using drugs or are already participating in risky drug use.

Other populations that will be considered are Aboriginal people, people living in rural and remote NSW, people with mental health issues, pregnant women, individuals at risk of domestic violence, children of parents who have substance use issues, older people, people in contact with the criminal justice system, culturally and linguistically diverse people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

The project team are encouraged to identify specific research questions that are a priority for the host organisation and where there is potential to apply the findings in policy or practice and/or scale up a successful intervention.

3. The project cannot be specific to one site only, unless justified because it is a proof of concept study or unless focused on a "virtual site" for a technology based intervention. The results of the research must be generalisable into policy and/or practice, and be applicable to other NGOs/LHDs/SHNs or across the Ambulance Service of NSW or NSW Health Pathology. The project and its results must have the capacity to be scaled up across settings, for example in other NGOs/LHDs or state-wide. Projects involving collaborations across multiple sites, or between one or more NGO or LHD/SHN or across the Ambulance Service/NSW Health Pathology will be prioritised.

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1 For the purposes of the Fund, non-government organisation is defined as "community based, not-for-profit organisations which exist independently of State Government Departments and instrumentalities but which may receive financial or other assistance from these for the provision of services required by the Government. Non-government organisations are independent incorporated organisations with their own management structures which are responsible for the operation of those services. The NGO sector is a complex mix of agencies of varying size incorporated under various legislation and with a plethora of objectives, but all serve the community in one form or another" (NSW Health 2011. PD2011_049 Non-Government Organisation Grant Program–Operational Guidelines).

4. The application must demonstrate engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. clinicians, consumers, health service administrators, researchers, patient groups, policy makers).

5. Applicants must provide a clear governance structure, including a steering committee for the project, and confirmation that grant funds will be quarantined for the purposes of the specified research project through a dedicated cost centre in the general fund.

6. Applicants must commit to reporting six monthly on research progress and expenditure.

Host organisation criteria

1. The host organisation must provide financial and in kind support for the research/translation activities.

2. The host organisation must conduct a review of the applications, ensuring they meet the intent of the Scheme before submitting.

3. The Chief Executive (or equivalent) of the host organisation must sign off on the grant application and agree that practice change will be implemented. Partner organisations also affected by practice change will need to co-sign the application.

Selection criteria

Project selection criteria for the Innovation Grants Scheme

All applications for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. The extent to which the project will generate **new and relevant evidence for policy and/or practice** relevant to AOD priorities, including specified priority areas and populations and likely impact of the results of the research on AOD prevention, patient care or health service delivery.

2. Strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research design, including the ability of the research team to carry out the proposed project in the timeframe.[2]

3. The extent to which the project supports the translation of positive research outcomes into policy and practice, including formal and informal activities for research translation and knowledge exchange.

4. Consideration of sustainability and scalability of the results of the study in the research design and translation plan, including that the study design will provide evidence to support funding decisions regarding the implementation of positive outcomes.

5. Engagement with appropriate stakeholders (e.g. researchers, clinicians, consumers, policy makers and the community) including:

   a. Consultation with partners and consumers in the development of the proposal
   b. Inclusion of essential partners who will contribute to the conduct and management of the research project
   c. Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders for the dissemination of new knowledge as it emerges, including clear links to the groups that will likely implement positive outcomes from the research.

Out of scope

This grants scheme is targeted at supporting practice-based research and evaluation projects. The following types of research are out of scope for this grants scheme:

1. Basic science research.

2. Research only occurring in a primary health network.

3. Pharmaceutical-sponsored clinical trials.

4. Projects with a primary focus on cancer. Funding in this area is provided by the Cancer Institute NSW and includes the Translational Program Grants.

5. Projects where the host is not responsible for implementation of the findings.

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2   Projects with fundamental flaws in the methods will not progress through to the Full Application stage or be funded.

Supporting resources

Information sessions

Information sessions will be delivered as webinars in September 2017 to clarify the intent and scope of the schemes. Webinar dates and topics are available on the AOD Early Intervention Innovation Fund website. Register your attendance as soon as possible by emailing aodgrants@moh.health.nsw.gov.au.

AOD Early Intervention Innovation Fund Website

The website contains further information and resources for applicants including:

- an overview of process guidelines for Expression of Interest and Full Application review
- details of funded projects from previous rounds which provides an indication of the range of project types
- FAQs about the scheme's processes and requirements.

Research Support

1. Translational Research Framework
The Translational Research Framework has been developed by the Sax Institute to build research capacity. The Framework assists grant applicants to refine research questions and identify feasible research methods to answer these questions.

The framework provides a number of prompts to help identify the steps you need to take to:

- demonstrate that a health service, program or policy innovation works
- understand the conditions under which it was successful (or unsuccessful)
- where appropriate, identify how to scale up an innovation for greatest impact.

The framework has been developed for health professionals who may have limited research experience, but may also be useful for more experienced researchers as a structured reminder of the range of issues that will be taken into account in the screening and assessment of full applications.

The Framework is available on the AOD Early Intervention Innovation Fund website accessed via: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/Pages/default.aspx

A video about the framework is available at: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/Pages/trgs-information-session-videos.aspx.

2. Program Evaluation Guide
The NADA's Program evaluation guide has been developed in partnership with Argyle Research & Training. It contains:

- an overview of evaluation, its benefits, challenges and how to overcome them
- advice on engaging an external evaluation consultant or university researcher
- information on setting up data and support systems for successful evaluation
- a step-by-step guide to planning and conducting an evaluation, and reporting evaluation results.

The guide is available at www.nada.org.au/resources/nadapublications/resourcestoolkits/program-evaluation/.

3. Full application development and ongoing technical research support
When an application proceeds from the EOI stage to the proposal development stage, technical research support by an independent researcher will be provided to help organisations to write a full application. Successful applicants progressing past the EOI stage will be notified about this directly.

Application and selection process

Review panels

Expressions of Interest will first be assessed by the Eligibility Panel, then by the AOD Review Panel against selection criteria. The AOD Review Panel is Chaired by the Executive Director, Centre for Population Health. The AOD Review Panel may contact applicants in order to clarify or confirm information contained in the EOI. The Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary Population and Public Health, NSW Ministry of Health, will be required to endorse the AOD Review Panel's recommendations.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their EOI. The AOD Review Panel's decision is final.

Full applications will be assessed by the AOD IGS Independent Selection Panel, chaired by the Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary Population and Public Health, NSW Ministry of Health. All applicants who submit a full application will be informed of the outcome. The AOD IGS Independent Selection Panel's decision is final.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

Applicants will submit an EOI that has been reviewed and supported by the host organisations and approved by the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of the host organisation.

EOIs will be assessed by the AOD Review Panel against both eligibility and selection criteria. EOIs must meet all eligibility criteria. The AOD Review Panel may contact applicants in order to clarify or confirm information contained in the EOI.

All applicants will be informed as to whether they have been selected to progress to Stage 2. Generalised feedback about EOIs will be made publicly available for applicants who are unsuccessful in progressing from Stage 1. The AOD Review Panel's decision is final.

Stage 2: Full application development

Stage 2 is a participatory feedback process. This stage is intended to enhance the quality of research proposals, ensure that proposals are consistent with the objectives of the Scheme, capitalise on potential synergies between projects and build research and translation capability.

Successful applicants will be provided with detailed feedback on their EOI.

As a key part of the feedback process, applicants will be provided with advice on potential partners and specialist expertise to improve the rigour of the research proposal or the associated translation activities. The NSW Ministry of Health will facilitate engagement with relevant collaborators to further develop the proposal, based on the recommendations of the AOD Review Panel.

Reasons for reviewers to suggest new partners to involve in a proposal might include:

■ connecting project teams to researchers with existing capability or expertise across the state

■ connecting the research project to similar research that is ongoing in other organisations

■ involving different organisations and/or demographics to increase the applicability of results to facilitate state-wide scale-up of successful outcomes

■ testing the scalability of an intervention in a different setting/organisation with a different organisational structure, skill set or history that might impact implementation

■ ensuring policy/strategic alignment of the research.

Where applicants from two or more NGOs submit similar proposals and there may be benefits of working together, the AOD Review Panel may recommend a meeting of relevant applicants.

All Stage 2 participants will be invited to submit a Full Application. Development of the Full Application is the responsibility of the project team. Participation in Stage 2 of the process is not a guarantee of funding.

When an application proceeds from the EOI stage to the application development stage, research support by an independent researcher will be provided to help with the development of the full application. Successful applicants progressing past the EOI Stage will be notified about this directly.

Full Application's must be approved by the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of the host organisation. Partner sites that will be affected by the project or implementation activities will also need to co-sign the Full Application.

The AOD IGS Independent Selection Panel will assess the applications against the selection criteria. The Independent Selection Panel may contact applicants in order to clarify or confirm information in the application.

Successful applicants to be awarded funding will be notified about this directly.

Stakeholder engagement

The Ministry of Health will engage with a range of policy and health service stakeholders on specific applications throughout the review process. Advice may be sought at any stage of the assessment process.

Host organisation review

Prior to submission, EOIs must be reviewed and certified by the host organisation to ensure that applications:

- meet the intent of the scheme
- are aligned with organisational or state priorities
- propose high quality research projects with appropriate methodological design
- are certified by the Chief Executive of the host organisation.

This process allows for host organisations to select the applications they will submit to the scheme.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will enter into a Funding Agreement with NSW Health which sets out obligations including that the applicants provide progress reports on research and translation activity. Where applicable, funding for the subsequent year will be made available only when the organisation has provided these reports showing satisfactory progress.

Details of remediation for unsatisfactory progress are outlined in the funding agreement.