

Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program

Information Kit for funding
Round Four
July 2013 to June 2017



Health

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November 2012

The Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program

Call for applications

The NSW Ministry of Health invites eligible organisations and collaborations to apply for funding under the fourth round of the NSW Health Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program (the PHHSRS Program), formerly known as the Capacity Building Infrastructure Grants Program. This Kit provides applicants with information about the PHHSRS Program, the submission procedure, selection processes, and reporting and evaluation requirements.

Submission of applications

All applications must be completed in accordance with the Instructions for Applicants and submitted on the Application Form, both found in the PHHSRS Application Package at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/phahsrsp.asp>

The PHHSRS Deed of Agreement, found on the same website, sets out the terms and conditions upon which PHHSRS funding will be provided. The NSW Ministry of Health will not enter into any negotiations around this Deed of Agreement.

An **electronic copy** of the Application Form and attachments must be emailed to the Ministry of Health at PHHSRS@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

In addition, **fifteen hard copies** of the Application Form and attachments (one original and fourteen copies) must be submitted by mail to the Locked Mail Bag or by courier to the street address below.

Both electronic and hard copy applications must be received by close of business (5:00 pm): **Friday 25 January 2013**

Applications must be submitted:

By mail to:

The Associate Director
Evidence and Evaluation Branch
Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence
NSW Ministry of Health
Locked Mail Bag 961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

OR by courier to:

The Associate Director
Evidence and Evaluation Branch
Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence
NSW Ministry of Health
73 Miller Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Indicative program timeline

Activity	Date
Call for applications	14 November 2012
Applications close	25 January 2013
Selection panel meeting	8 March 2013
Announcement of successful applicants	April 2013
Fourth round of PHHSRS funding	July 2013

Further information

All questions regarding the Program must be directed to email: PHHSRS@doh.health.nsw.gov.au. All such questions (de-identified of author/organisation) and the Ministry's responses to those questions will be posted on the NSW Health website at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/phahsrsp.asp>. This will ensure that all applicants have equal access to information regarding the Program.

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Introduction

The Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program (the PHHSRS Program) is a competitive funding program of the NSW Ministry of Health.

There have been three rounds of funding under the Program, then known as the Capacity Building Infrastructure Grants Program, the first from July 2003 to June 2006, the second from July 2006 to December 2009 and the third from January 2010 to June 2013.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the PHHSRS Program is to build capacity and strengthen population health and health services research that is important to NSW Health and leads to changes in the health of the population and health services in NSW.

The objectives of the Program are:

1. To increase high quality and internationally recognised population health and health services research in NSW.
2. To support the generation of research findings that address NSW Health priorities.
3. To encourage the adoption of research findings in health policies, programs and services in NSW.

For the PHHSRS Program the following definitions apply:

Population health research includes the investigation and analysis of factors that influence the health status of groups or whole populations, as well as the testing and evaluation of policies and interventions to improve population health outcomes.¹

Health services research is a multi-disciplinary research activity with an implicit objective of improving the health

services patients receive. Thus it is an area of applied rather than 'basic' research - it uses theories of human behaviour from contributing disciplines, along with evidence from the medical sciences, to generate and test hypotheses about the delivery of health care. The focus on services is what distinguishes health services research from other multi-disciplinary health research activities.²

Note: Clinical research, such as evaluations of the efficacy of clinical interventions (e.g. pharmaceuticals, surgical procedures and diagnostic techniques), at an individual level, is not included in the definitions for the PHHSRS Program.^{3,4}

Who can be an applicant?

Applicants must be discrete entities whose research focus is primarily population health and/or health services research.

Applicants must be one of the following:

- An independent legal entity;
- A discrete, separately identifiable unit or research program within a tertiary institution or Local Health District, such as a research centre within a university;
- A discrete, separately identifiable unit or research program within a larger research organisation that is other than a tertiary institution or Local Health District; or
- A collaboration of organisations, or parts of organisations, that have come together to pursue population health and/or health services research. Collaborations must be genuine ventures to further ongoing research programs, and not simply a "coalition of convenience" to enable organisations to obtain PHHSRS funding. Collaborations must have been demonstrably present and separately identifiable from member organisations since July 2011. Collaborations

¹ NHMRC Report of the Review of Public Health Research Funding in Australia, Dec 2008.

² Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand website: <http://www.hsraanz.org/About/WhatIsHSR.aspx>

³ NHMRC Response to: The Report of the Review of Public Health Research Funding in Australia, May 2009.

⁴ NHMRC Partnerships for Better Health – Partnership Projects Funding Rules, April 2012.

should be able to show that they contribute to the PHHSRS Program objectives, over and above the contributions made separately by their member organisations.

Recipients of PHHSRS funding under previous rounds of the Program are eligible to re-apply for funding under this round. However, there should be no expectation that PHHSRS funds will continue to go to the same organisations. It is anticipated that PHHSRS recipients will grow as a result of receiving PHHSRS funding to allow them to obtain other sources of infrastructure funding in the future.

An organisation may apply for funds under both the PHHSRS Program and the Medical Research Support Program (MRSP), administered by the Office for Health and Medical Research, NSW Ministry of Health. If an applicant or their parent entity will be in receipt of infrastructure funding from any NSW State Government agency (including MRSP funding) during the PHHSRS grant period, funding under the PHHSRS Program may be reduced. This is primarily to prevent double funding from NSW Government sources.

SECTION 2

Round Four PHHSRS Funding

Round Four of funding under the PHHSRS Program will commence in July 2013. Six grants of up to \$2 million (\$500,000 per annum for four years) are available to successful applicants under the Program.

Use of PHHSRS funding

The PHHSRS Program will direct funds towards research infrastructure support and the provision of an environment in which the capacity to conduct and use research is enhanced.

Infrastructure for research consists of the essential institutional resources underpinning research that are not covered by research grants. For the purposes of the PHHSRS Program, funds may be used for:

- Scientific equipment;
- Purchase of generic consumables such as stationery;
- Subscriptions to information services and databases;
- Library resources;
- Collection, management and purchase of data;
- Computer equipment and software licenses;
- Salaries of administrative staff; salaries of research staff employed to provide general support (i.e. to more than one project) and salaries of research fellows, including salary on-costs.

It is an expectation of the PHHSRS Program that successful applicants will continue to receive their core infrastructure funds from their parent organisation or primary funding body. As such, capital works, general maintenance costs, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities should be paid for from the core funding source of the applicant, not from PHHSRS funds.

PHHSRS funds may be used for the following **capacity building** strategies:

- Stipends (full or part) for PhD and other doctoral scholarship holders;
- Accessing expertise to assist with research when required;
- Development of policies or procedures of the applicant that support quality research;
- Development of strategic partnerships for research;
- Professional development in research for staff and students of the applicant;
- Research training for researchers and health workers in NSW; and
- Strategies that support translation of research into policy and/or practice.

Note: Funding under the PHHSRS Program cannot be directed towards specific research projects or direct project costs. It is expected that successful applicants under the PHHSRS Program will continue to attract funding for research projects from other sources.

The Selection Process

The assessment of applications will involve a two-step process.

Step 1: Eligibility assessment

Applicants must first meet the eligibility criteria.

Any applications that do not meet all of the eligibility criteria will not progress to Step 2. Eligibility assessment will be undertaken by NSW Ministry of Health staff, who may contact applicants directly to clarify any issues with their application.

Step 2: Selection of applicants for funding

Applications that meet all of the eligibility criteria will be examined by a Selection Panel appointed by the Chief Health Officer and Deputy Director-General Population and Public Health, NSW Ministry of Health. The Selection Panel will include members both internal and external to NSW Health, with expertise in population health and health services research, with at least one member from interstate.

The Selection Panel will evaluate and rank applications in order of merit against the selection criteria. In doing so, they will take into account the weighting assigned to each group of selection criteria. **The Selection Panel will undertake this process on 8 March 2013.**

The Selection Panel will recommend:

- The number of successful applicants, in accordance with their merit.
- The amount of funding to be provided to each successful applicant from the funds available under the PHHSRS Program and the funding period, bearing in mind the bid put forward in the application. The Selection Panel may, at its discretion, determine not to award the full amount sought by the applicant. A rationale will be provided to the successful applicant if the full amount is not awarded.

The Selection Panel may wish to contact applicants by telephone during the selection process to provide further explanation of their application. **A Senior Representative of the applicant should therefore be available to be contacted by telephone on 8 March 2013.** This representative should be in a position to clarify any matters relating to the application at the time of the enquiry. **It will not be possible to respond to the Selection Panel's queries at a later date.**

The Selection Panel is not obliged to recommend all or any funding under the PHHSRS Program if, in their opinion, applications do not meet the selection criteria to a sufficiently high standard.

The Selection Panel will recommend successful applicants to the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research for funding under the PHHSRS Program.

SECTION 4

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants are only eligible for consideration under the PHHSRS Program if they meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

1. The research focus of the applicant is primarily population health and/or health services research.
2. The applicant is located in NSW.
3. The applicant has sufficient existing capacity to support future sustained growth, including:
 - a. core infrastructure funding from sources other than the PHHSRS Program;
 - b. impact of receiving PHHSRS Program funds on future infrastructure support;
 - c. the equivalent of two senior full-time research staff whose salary is securely funded; and
 - d. a total research income of at least, on average, \$1.2 million per annum over the calendar years 2009 to 2011 inclusive. Some of this funding must be from peer-reviewed sources.
4. The applicant is a not-for-profit organisation.
5. The applicant is a discrete operational entity that can demonstrate it has:
 - a. a defined management structure;
 - b. sufficient independence to determine its own research directions and use of funds;
 - c. a director with experience in the areas of research conducted by the applicant and appropriate post-graduate qualifications; and
 - d. for collaborations - a written agreement between their member organisations formalising the collaboration.
6. The applicant has formal links with relevant policy or service branch(es) of the NSW Ministry of Health or NSW Health Pillar(s) and with at least one Local Health District.

For more detail on the eligibility criteria, please refer to the Instructions for Applicants in the PHHSRS Application Package.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria have been developed to reflect the objectives and expected outcomes of the PHHSRS Program. Information provided in response to selection criteria on the PHHSRS Application Form will be used as the basis for ranking and selection of successful applicants.

Selection criteria

1. Selection criteria related to Objective 1 (research excellence):
 - a. Research income (particularly income from peer-reviewed sources)
 - b. Number of research staff employed
 - c. Number of post-graduate research students supervised
 - d. Number of scholarships and fellowships secured
 - e. Number of publications (particularly peer-reviewed publications)
 - f. Number of collaborative research ventures with inter-state, national and/or international partners
2. Selection criteria related to Objective 2 (alignment with NSW Health priorities, i.e. 'importance to NSW Health'):
 - a. The process for setting the research agenda of the applicant
 - b. How the applicant's current research activities address NSW Health priorities
3. Selection criteria related to Objective 3 (translation of research findings into policy and practice):
 - a. Number and type of functioning links with NSW Health
 - b. Number of grants in which NSW Health policy or service staff are identified partners or to which NSW Health has formally committed to co-funding or support-in-kind in the application
 - c. Number of processes to support, and instances of, translation of the applicant's research findings into policy and practice
4. The applicant's PHHSRS Plan, comprising:
 - a. A grant bid
 - b. How the PHHSRS funds will be used, including:
 - planned strategies, related indicators of success and timeframes against which the implementation of the strategies can be measured over the funding period; and
 - a rationale for the proposed strategies and how they will contribute to the objectives of the PHHSRS Program.

For more detail on the selection criteria, please refer to the Instructions for Applicants in the PHHSRS Application Package.

Weighting of selection criteria

In scoring applications, the Selection Panel will assign a weighting of 25% to each of the four groups of selection criteria.

SECTION 6

Reporting and Evaluation

In order to enhance the ability of the PHHSRS Program to meet its objectives, NSW Health will evaluate the performance of funded organisations and the PHHSRS Program as a whole.

Reporting requirements

Successful applicants will be required to provide regular reports during the funding period on progress in relation to indicators of research success and their achievements toward meeting the objectives of the Program. Information provided in response to selection criteria on the PHHSRS Application Form will be used as baseline data against which progress and outcomes of the Program will be measured. Recipients will also be asked to report on progress against the strategies and timelines included in their PHHSRS Plan. Funding for subsequent years will be made available only when an organisation has provided a report showing satisfactory progress.

The Deed of Agreement includes a number of strategies for dealing with the situation where NSW Health considers that a funded organisation is not performing to an appropriate level. These include collaborative discussions between NSW Health and the organisation regarding the organisation's directions and possible ways to enhance performance. The Deed of Agreement contains measures to be taken in the event of poor performance.

PHHSRS recipients will be required to meet with NSW Health staff annually during the funding period. NSW Health may organise up to three seminars for Round Four of the Program including one at or shortly after the conclusion of the funding period. The purpose of such seminars will be for funded organisations to present their research work to their peers and policy-makers and to encourage feedback, interaction and knowledge transfer amongst these groups. Researchers will have the opportunity to hear about NSW Health directions and research needs.

Program evaluation

Regular meetings with PHHSRS recipients and seminars will also be used to facilitate feedback from funded organisations and others about future directions for the PHHSRS Program, how it can be improved and other support or incentives NSW Health could provide to assist in meeting the Program objectives.

NSW Health may, either during or at the end of the funding period, undertake an evaluation of the PHHSRS Program. This evaluation will be done in co-operation with the funded organisations, who may be requested to provide information, allow evaluators to visit their premises and provide further feedback on the Program.

