

OVERVIEW

The BC SUPPORT Unit Island Centre, part of the [Island Health Research Department](#), supports Patient-Oriented Research (POR) which is done in partnership with patients, answers research questions that matter to patients, and aims to improve health outcomes and experiences. Learn more about the [Canadian Institutes for Health Research Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research \(SPOR\)](#).

As part of our commitment to facilitating relationships between patients, researchers, healthcare providers, decision-makers, and other interest holders, we invite applications for **Patient-Oriented Research (POR) Team Assist Awards**. Funding is provided by the [BC SUPPORT Unit](#), with funds held at Island Health and distributed according to Island Health policies. For the purpose of this award, “patients” are defined broadly to include anyone with lived experience of a health condition, including informal caregivers, family, and friends.

Island Health’s Research Facilitation team offers free services including:

- **Research navigation:** supporting the development of multi-disciplinary teams and connecting researchers with health system leaders and decision-makers.
- **Patient engagement:** assisting with engagement planning, recruitment of patient partners, and their onboarding and orientation.
- **Knowledge translation:** Ensuring end-users are meaningfully involved throughout the research process to improve relevance and impact.

Reach out to us at researchfacilitation@islandhealth.ca to schedule a meeting with a member of our team. We’d be happy to discuss your project, budget, and application, and explore how we can help move your work forward.

OBJECTIVES AND AWARD DETAILS

The POR Team Assist Awards provide support for early-stage, pre-grant activities that will help teams develop or strengthen POR projects aligned with health system strategic priorities. *Not sure if your expense is eligible? Need help thinking through your budget? Let’s meet to discuss:* researchfacilitation@islandhealth.ca

These awards are designed to:

- **Support** the formation of new multi-disciplinary POR research teams or strengthen existing ones
- **Promote** collaboration amongst relevant interest holders
- **Reduce** barriers to meaningful patient engagement
- **Empower** patients to help identify and prioritize research questions
- **Enable** teams to submit strong POR applications to future funding opportunities

Teams may request funding for expenses such as:

- Planning and coordinating of POR team meetings
- Hosting engagement opportunities (e.g., catering, honoraria, materials)
- Renting meeting space for public forums or workshops
- [Compensating](#) patient partners, caregivers, people with lived experience and/or physicians for their time
- Small stipend for students for their contributions to coordination, support, or facilitation
- Accessibility or cultural support services to enable inclusive participation

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible, proposed activities must:

- Involve patients, family members, caregivers, or people with lived experience as partners
- Include (or plan to engage with) Island Health clinicians and/or decision makers
 - *We would be pleased to support connections to Island Health, please reach out to researchfacilitation@islandhealth.ca*
- Address patient-identified priorities (i.e. what matters most to patients)
- Aim to improve healthcare experiences or outcomes
- Priority will be given to projects that address health system priorities (see priority research areas below)

Additional requirements:

- The Project Lead and/or Co-Lead must be based in British Columbia and be affiliated with Island Health or another Vancouver Island-based host institution, organization, or Indigenous community.
- All funds must be spent on activities within the [Island Health region](#)

Priority Research Areas

Activities that align with the priorities below are preferred. However, topics that are outside of these priorities will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- I. **Improve the Experiences Quality and Outcomes for the People We Serve**
Examples of priority populations include seniors (including LTC and home and community care enhancements), patients needing surgery
- II. **Improve the Experience, Health & Well-Being of all People at Island Health**
Enhancing access to primary care services and rural and remote health care services
- III. **Increase Health Human Resource Capacity & Adapt to Changing Workforce Needs**
Addressing capacity issues in acute hospitals and improving access to care
- IV. **Improve Population Health and Wellness, Reduce Health Inequities**
Addressing knowledge and service gaps related to Indigenous cultural safety and anti-racism, as identified by Indigenous community members, mental health and substance use care

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, complete a brief application form located [here](#).

You will be asked to provide:

- Contact information
- Project title and 350 word written summary OR short video (maximum 3 minutes)
- Type(s) of support the team is seeking
- Amounts of funding requested*

*The total pot of funds available for everyone through this award program is \$20,000, with additional funding available for projects that engage rural and remote or Indigenous communities.

Please be mindful of the amount you request. We kindly ask that you keep expenses reasonable. This helps ensure we have the capacity to support as many worthy projects as possible!

*If you are working on a project related to rural and remote and/or Indigenous communities, additional funds may be available. Please reach out.

When to apply:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and will be reviewed monthly by the Research Facilitation Team at Island Health. To be considered for a given month, applications must be submitted by the 15th, will be reviewed by the end of the month and notification of the outcome will occur within one week of the review date. Funds must be spent by December 30 2026.

2025-2026 Schedule:

2025-2026	Submission Deadline	Review Period	Notification By
December 2025	December 15	December 16–31	January 7, 2026
January 2026	January 15	January 16-31	February 7
February	February 15	February 16-28	March 7
March	March 15	March 16–31	April 7
April	April 15	April 16-30	May 7
May	May 15	May 16-31	June 8
June	June 15	June 16-30	July 7
July	July 15	July 16-31	August 7
August	August 15	August 16-31	September 7
September	September 15	September 16-30	October 7
October	October 15	October 16-30	November 9

SCREENING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

- 1) Initial screening:** The research facilitation team will confirm that applications meet eligibility criteria. A staff member may follow up with questions if clarification is needed before moving to scoring.
- 2) Scoring:** Applications will then be reviewed using a points system. There can be no zero scores in any category, and projects must score at least a 10/15 to be eligible for funding.

Scoring Criteria (15 points total): 0 = Not at all, 1 = Somewhat, 2 = Mostly, 3 = Completely

Category	Description	Points
Patient Involvement	Clearly outlines how patients, caregivers, or people with lived experience will be meaningfully engaged.	0–3
Relevance to Patient Priorities	Addresses an issue that patients have identified as important <i>or</i> includes plans to determine those priorities through engagement.	0–3
Health Impact	Demonstrates a clear link to improving health outcomes or healthcare experiences through research.	0–3
Feasibility	Activities are realistic, achievable within 6 months, and align with a proposed timeline and budget.	0–3
Alignment with Strategic Priorities	The outcomes of this initiative align with and support one or more of Island Health’s strategic priorities.	0–3

QUESTIONS?

Need help applying? We’re here to support you. If you would like help with your project plan, budget or application, email us at researchfacilitation@islandhealth.ca to book a meeting with our team.

Island Health acknowledges the homelands of the three Indigenous families on and around Vancouver Island: the Kwakwaka’wakw, Nuuchahnulth, and Coast Salish peoples. We are committed to addressing the ongoing impacts of colonialism and Indigenous-specific racism, and strive to decolonize research and promote cultural safety and humility. We welcome diverse ways of knowing, and seek to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion for all. Above all, we believe meaningful research must foster respectful relationships that put people first.