

Kids Brain Health Network Request for Applications

About KBHN: The Kids Brain Health Network (KBHN) is a national research network dedicated to improving the lives of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. Established under the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program in 2010, KBHN is focused on bridging the gap between scientific discovery and innovation and the families who need it most. KBHN supports interdisciplinary, equity-focused, collaborative research aimed at moving knowledge into action while also building capacity in the next generation of leaders in the neurodevelopmental ecosystem.

With new support from the federal Strategic Science Fund (SSF), KBHN will address critical needs of the community by supporting implementation of evidence-based solutions to improve outcomes for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. This will be achieved by mobilizing the expertise and resources of science, technology and innovation (ST&I) excellence through partnerships between universities, research institutes, industry, government and non-profit, private and public sector, and diverse international and community organizations. KBHN particularly values the voice of families and individuals with lived experience in the research that it funds, as partners to translate scientific discovery into practical, culturally informed, and accessible practices, products, and policy changes that will lead to better outcomes for the children and families we serve.

Our Vision: All children living with neurodevelopmental disabilities enjoy quality of life, inclusion in all aspects of society and reach their full potential.

Our Mission: Through catalyzing collective action across sectors, KBHN ensures optimal care and better outcomes for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families.

KBHN supports transformative research and implementation in **three core challenge areas**:

- (i) **Early Identification:** Evidence-based early screening tools are needed to identify children at risk of a neurodevelopmental disability. With early identification, evidence-based interventions and supports can be harnessed in the critical early years for optimal brain development.
- (ii) **Access to Interventions:** Evidence-based interventions for neurodevelopmental disabilities are not progressing quickly enough into practice and/or are not being scaled in an accessible manner in all parts of the country or to diverse cultures and communities where there is a demonstrated need.
- (iii) **Family Support:** The supports for children living with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families are fragmented and inadequate. This creates increased parental stress and anxiety, a disproportionate negative impact on the ability of caregivers (particularly mothers) to participate in the workforce, and a negative impact on the quality of life for both children and families.

KBHN will fund research and innovation that produces measurable economic, societal and health benefits, and has potential for real-world implementation, intellectual property creation, and/or scale-up and spread in the delivery of solutions to the challenges faced by children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families, whilst building an ecosystem of skilled, diverse people that fulfill industry and societal needs for Canada.

Request for proposals: KBHN is committed to implementation, scale and spread of research innovations into practice and ensuring evidence-based solutions reach their intended audiences. In support of these goals, the **Innovation Program** and **Implementation Program** were established as two distinct but complementary funding streams. These programs will leverage KBHN funds and Network expertise to

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support projects with the potential to generate impact and value for end users. The **expected outputs** of these projects could include, but are not limited to, changes in practice or policy, advancing new technologies or establishing new applications for existing technologies, and implementing, expanding or scaling direct supports for children and families. KBHN will select and fund the most promising transformative research proposals to address core challenges in early identification, access to evidence-based interventions, and support for families and that bridge the gap between scientific innovation to uptake on a national scale.

Innovation Program

The Innovation Program is designed to establish a pipeline of new projects that demonstrate a strong, near-term potential for implementation or commercialization readiness to advance KBHN's mandate to make a difference in the lives of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families across Canada. Successful proposals will be internationally competitive leading-edge projects that contribute to building Canada's capacity for world-class research and its innovation talent in areas related to health and technology.

Criteria:

- Proposals must focus on advancing KBHN's mission and vision to make a difference in the lives of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families across Canada
- Proposal must provide sound scientific rationale and demonstrate potential to increase accessibility of solutions to diverse, vulnerable, and/or under-served populations.
- Proposals must demonstrate potential for national scope
- Include consideration for overcoming the physical, geographic and/or language barriers that currently limit accessibility to evidence-based early identification, interventions, and family support
- The project team must include leadership from innovators committed to the process of implementation and/or commercialization
- The project team must include a person with lived experience in the area of focus
- Teams must include individuals with training in implementation science and a preference for implementation experience
- Projects must include partnership with at least one of industry, government agencies, community and/or service delivery organizations that will contribute 1:1 matched funding

Award Amount and Term

- Successful project teams may request up to \$100,000/year for up to 2-years from KBHN. 1:1 partner matching of KBHN funding is required.

Implementation Program

The Implementation Program will support large-scale Implementation Projects positioned to bridge the gap between scientific innovation to uptake on a national scale through partnerships between universities, research institutes, industry, government and non-profit, private and public sector, and diverse international and community organizations. Successful projects are expected to achieve measurable advances in social solutions, changes to practice or policy, digital or biomedical innovations, or new commercial products that contribute to improving quality of life for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families.

KBHN will work collaboratively with successful projects to leverage its established network of partners in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors to support each project in building an acceleration plan that lays out the path for mobilization, implementation, and scaling of solutions that will deliver measurable socio-economic and health benefits to Canadians. To bring focus and expertise to the development and implementation of these acceleration plans, each project will receive support from a business development resource who will work closely with KBHN executive leadership and the Advisory Councils.

Criteria:

- Proposals must focus on advancing KBHN's mandate to make a difference in the lives of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families across Canada
- Proposal must demonstrate rigorous scientific evidence and are expected to contribute to strengthening evidence-based decision making, innovation skills development, and building a solutions-focused science culture
- Projects must be national in scope
- Demonstrate potential to increase accessibility of solutions to diverse, vulnerable, and/or under-served populations.
- Include consideration for overcoming the physical, geographic and/or language barriers that currently limit accessibility to evidence-based early identification, interventions, and family support
- Project team must include leadership from innovators committed to the process of implementation and/or commercialization
- Project team must include at least one individual with lived experience in the area of focus
- Project team must include a person with training in implementation science and preference for some implementation experience.
- Projects must include partnership with at least one of industry, government agencies, community and/or service delivery organizations and include 1:1 matched funding

Award Amount and Term

- Successful project teams may request up to \$200,000/year for up to 2-years from KBHN. 1:1 partner matching of KBHN funding is required.

Application Procedure and Eligibility (both competitions)

The Nominated Principal Investigator must be eligible to receive operating funds from the Strategic Science Fund. However, the Principal Investigator and/or Co-Principal Investigator may be from a partner organization.

These organizations include:

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- Federal, provincial, or territorial government agencies
- Post-secondary institutions;
- Research hospitals;
- Not-for-profit organizations;
- Indigenous organizations and governments;
- Municipalities;
- Research networks;
- Public engagement networks;
- Companies that deliver public engagement activities; and
- Industry, including start-up companies housed in Canadian post-secondary-linked incubators.

The proposed research **must**:

- (i) Advance innovative solutions that improve outcomes for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families in at least one of KBHN’s key focus areas; and
- (ii) Engage families and/or individuals with lived experience in the design, conduct, analysis and dissemination of the research; and
- (iii) Involve knowledge user partners in either the private or public sector who are well-positioned to adopt and implement the research outputs.
- (iv) Include a person with training in implementation science

Applications are required to include:

- (a) Written commitment that KBHN’s investment in the research will be matched from external sources at a ratio of at least 1:1; and
- (b) Detailed plan for sustainability of the initiative beyond the term of this funding (e.g., commercialization strategy, scaling and implementation into practice).

Matched funding:

Matched funding must be contributions (cash or in-kind) to be spent on the SSF project. Match funds cannot include any federal source, including all federal sources that flow through separate entities (e.g. Tri-Agency funding to universities, federal funding to other organizations). Whilst these sources of funding do not count as match funding, the potential for leveraging other federal funding is encouraged. Matched funds for this competition cannot have been reported as matching funds for another federal program.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

KBHN funded projects should aim to increase accessibility of solutions to vulnerable and/or under-served populations, with a special emphasis on under-represented groups (e.g., Indigenous peoples, racialized Canadians, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals). Projects with this focus are highly encouraged.

Proposal Submission-Review Timeline:

Request for proposals launch	July 22, 2024
Application Submission Deadline:	December 16, 2024
Anticipated Date for Award Notices:	February, 28, 2025
Anticipated Award Start Date:	March 1, 2025

Applications must be received by 5 p.m. PDT on December 16, 2024 and can be submitted to research@kidsbrainhealth.ca. **Late applications will not be considered.**

Application format

The full application must include the following:

- Description of project team: Nominated PI and/or PI, Co-PIs, co-applicants, collaborators, partners, stakeholders (1 page maximum)
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Under-represented Statement (1-page maximum)
- Abstract (1-page maximum)
- Proposal (10-pages maximum)
 - Provide a detailed explanation of the project objectives, methods, outcomes and evaluation plan, including timelines and key milestones.
 - Describe the role/contribution of each member of the project team.
 - Provide a detailed plan for sustainability of the initiative beyond the term of this funding (e.g., commercialization strategy, scaling and implementation into practice).
- References
- Lay Summary (200 words maximum)
- Impact Statement (2-pages maximum)
 - Describe the metrics by which success and impact of the project will be determined (e.g., number of children/families who will benefit from the research, number and type of knowledge user organizations, new policies or practices expected from uptake of the innovation, new intellectual property created, new or expanded market for commercialization of innovative solutions).
- Budget Justification (2-page maximum)
- Budget Template
- Letters of Support confirming scientific, implementation, and financial contributions (cash and in-kind) of key partners and stakeholders

Required attachments (**no other attachments or supplementary information will be considered**)

- PI, Co-PI and co-applicant CVs (Canadian Common CV – CIHR Project Bio sketch or equivalent format)

Full Application Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on:

- Strength of the research team, including the commitment of partners and key stakeholders.
- Current state of knowledge/evidence supporting uptake of the innovation.
- Level of engagement of families and/or individuals with lived experience in the design, conduct, analysis and/or dissemination of the research.
- Strength of the proposal in addressing Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, and Under-represented.
- Relevance of the research to the priority areas of the Kids Brain Health Network.
- Impact and feasibility of achieving the expected outcomes within the funding period requested.
- Opportunities for training of Highly Qualified Personnel.
- Scale and spread strategy and sustainability plan, including the potential to generate near-term and long-term impact on children and families.

The Nominated Principal Investigator will be notified of the results of the Full Application no later than Feb 28 2025. Successful awardee/s will be expected to work with KBHN Communications to generate a suitable press release.