Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations

Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations
2022 Catalyst Grant Competition

About the Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations:

Cities everywhere are struggling with rising rates of chronic conditions, with diabetes alone affecting more than 420 million people. As with COVID-19 and many other public health crises, there are severe social inequities as to who faces the greatest risk and burden of these potentially devastating diseases. That's why we urgently need new, scalable solutions to address chronic conditions and halt their unsustainable rise. It's a global challenge that can only be solved through collaboration and innovation, with public health initiatives, medical breakthroughs, new technologies, and community outreach all playing a part.

In 2021, a generous $20-million donation from Novo Nordisk and matching funds from U of T established the Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations at the University of Toronto to jumpstart this new era in the fight against diabetes and related conditions. Based at University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), the Novo Nordisk Network brings together leading researchers from UTM, the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and Temerty Faculty of Medicine. They are actively engaging regional community partners to co-create new approaches to chronic disease prevention and care that speak to the lived experiences of diverse populations. Peel Region is an ideal location for discovering and nurturing this kind of transformational research and developing innovative outreach initiatives that can make cities healthier places to live. Home to the country’s largest community-based hospital system, this growing region provides an opportunity for researchers to understand the impact of social and built environments on behaviours, health outcomes, and access to services in a highly diverse setting.

2022 Catalyst Grant Competition Description:

The Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations is committed to supporting multi-disciplinary, collaborative teams to co-design initiatives and interventions in the Peel Region focused on reducing the burden of diabetes and chronic disease. As a first step, the Network is seeking proposals for existing interventions that have shown promise in other settings to be considered for local adaptation and implementation. The Network will support an Implementation Science approach to tailor, adopt, and integrate evidence-informed practices, interventions, and policies into local health care, community services, and living environments to improve the impact on population health. This grant opportunity will catalyze partnerships between researchers and local stakeholders to bridge the divide between research and practice, and bring programs that work to communities in need.
The goals of this catalyst grant opportunity are to:

1. Identify, adapt, and pilot test evidence-informed solutions to address the rising burden or risk of diabetes and chronic disease that are locally relevant, feasible, and equitable for the Peel Region.

2. Spark interdisciplinary collaboration across sectors and, to foster the creation of partnerships between researchers, policymakers, knowledge users, and people with lived experience to collectively implement relevant, feasible, effective and equitable solutions.

3. Mobilize diverse methodologies, multiple disciplines and perspectives, and knowledge mobilization approaches to generate evidence that is relevant and useful for local stakeholders.

4. Demonstrate pilot data on local implementation of evidence-informed interventions to support longer-term evaluation of impact on health outcomes and scale and spread to other regions.

Catalyst Grants will be awarded to support evidence-informed programs, interventions, approaches, or evaluations that have shown promise in other contexts and align to the Network’s mission: To reduce social inequities in risk and burden of diabetes and other chronic diseases through better care, lower risk factors and healthier living environments.

Awards will be granted following a rigorous peer review by a Selection Committee comprised of members from across the University of Toronto, the Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations’ Advisory Committee and community members from across the Peel Region.

In advance of reviewing full applications, there will be a Letter of Intent (LOI) stage to vet potential applications for relevance, to foster collaboration of groups working on similar proposals and to facilitate connections to stakeholders and knowledge users within the Peel Region community.

A maximum award of $75,000 per year, up to 2 years, will be available for each successful grant.

Specific Objectives (projects may be relevant to multiple objectives):

Catalyst grant projects must address one or more of the following Network objectives:

1. **Interventions focused on the ‘micro’ health level (i.e. the individual level where people seek care), that improve the quality of diabetes care and prevention.** We are seeking projects that propose evidence-informed interventions focused on patients and families, health care providers and health care administrators that will help make health services more coordinated, effective and accessible.

2. **Interventions focused on the ‘meso’ health level (i.e. the community level where people spend their time), that reduce risk factors for diabetes and chronic disease.** We are seeking projects focused on evidence-informed, accessible, and culturally adaptable interventions that aim to increase diabetes awareness and optimize health behaviours within specific high-risk groups, community-based organizations or local business settings.
3. **Interventions focused on the ‘macro’ health level (i.e. the ‘city/policy’ level where people live and work), that create healthier environments.** We are seeking projects focused on evidence-informed interventions that target areas such as municipal and regional policies and urban planning to optimize the built environment, access to healthy foods, physical activity and medicines.

Research proposals must aim to address the risk or burden of diabetes and chronic disease, and demonstrate an Implementation Science approach: applicants will be expected to describe how they will adapt an evidence-informed intervention to the local context, and then integrate it into health care settings, community services, policies or other relevant settings.

**Intervention Requirements:**

1. Evidence-informed: Components of the intervention must have been piloted or tested in another setting and found to be promising at improving service indicators, risk factors and/or outcomes for diabetes and chronic disease;

2. Equitable: Must have a population health and equity focus and aim to positively affect all or priority populations within Peel Region, improving the environmental, social, cultural, and/or structural determinants of health related to diabetes and chronic disease;

3. Implementable: Can include policy changes, introduction of a new program or practice, and/or physical changes to the environment to improve risk and/or outcomes of diabetes and chronic disease that can adapted and feasibly be implemented within the Peel Region;

4. Engaged: Must engage community stakeholders as equal partners in the research. Stakeholders should be involved in developing the research questions and methodology, as well as in data collection, the interpretation of findings and dissemination of results. A description of potential community stakeholders should be outlined in the LOI, however confirmation of community stakeholders and their role on the project will not be required until the full application submission (Feb. 15, 2023).

**Submission, Review and Notifications Process:**

- Completed **LOI application forms** and the CV of the nominated Principal Investigator, including current appointments, grants and relevant publications (abbreviated version, maximum five pages) will be accepted until September 1, 2022, 5:00pm EDT. Incomplete LOI applications will not be processed.

- Applications will be reviewed by the Network’s Selection Committee; ad hoc reviewers may be included in the review process as subject matter experts.
  - If a member of the Network’s Selection Committee wishes to apply, they will be excused from the adjudication process for that application and a replacement Committee member will be appointed.

- Top ranked LOI applicants will be notified by October 15, 2022, and invited to present their proposal at a Network community stakeholder pitch-event on November 21, 2022.
Applicants wishing to move forward in the application process must be available to present on November 21, 2022 from 12:00pm-2:00pm

- Network Community Stakeholder Pitch-Event:
  - Top ranked applicants will be invited to present their proposal to local community stakeholders and advisors on November 21, 2022. This community stakeholder pitch-event will be attended by members of the University of Toronto's academic community, the Network's Advisory Committee, and invited stakeholders of the larger Peel Region.
  - The pitch-event is an opportunity for stakeholders from the Peel community to learn about potential projects of interest to their community/organization, and for project teams to learn about community stakeholders. This event is also meant to connect applicants with potential stakeholders wishing to partner with them for the co-development of the final proposal, in order to support the facilitation and development of collaborative project teams.

- Applicants successful at the LOI pitch-competition stage will be notified of the Committee’s decision by December 1, 2022, and will be invited to submit full applications (application packages to be released at a later date).

- Full application submissions due: February 15, 2023, 5:00pm EDT.

- Notice of decision and funding to commence: April 1, 2023.

Application Process Timeline:

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<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>LOI submissions due</td>
<td>September 1, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notice of decision: Invitation proceed to presentation stage</td>
<td>October 15, 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOI Network pitch presentation event</td>
<td>November 21, 2022</td>
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<td>Notice of decision: Invitation to submit full application</td>
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Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators and Collaborators:

- Each Principal Investigator (PI) must have a budgetary appointment at the University of Toronto. Faculty budgetary appointments for U of T are continuing, full-time academic appointments with salary commitments from a U of T academic unit. PI's must also be eligible to hold research funding at the University of Toronto.
• Project teams must demonstrate a cross disciplinary focus, and include:
  o At least one student or early career researcher (within 5 years of faculty appointment)
  o At least one community stakeholder from the Peel Region as a member of the project team (not required to be named on the LOI application, but must be determined by the time of full proposal submission)
  o At least one knowledge user from the Peel Region (not required to be named on the LOI application, but must be determined by the time of full proposal submission)

• Proposals with demonstrated multidisciplinary teams, ideally from different units or areas of study, will be rated higher

• Students, trainees and fellows without faculty appointments may be listed as co-applicants or team members but cannot apply as principal applicants.

Funding Guidelines:

• Grants will be awarded up to $75,000 per year, up to 2 years.

• More than one application can be submitted by the same applicant; however, priority will be given to funding as many distinct research groups as possible.

• This funding is not to be used as bridging or emergency funding, nor is it intended to support ongoing studies. It may, however, support a new direction of a previously funded project, and can be combined with additional funding to support new projects.

• A condition of the grant is that Investigators commit to present findings during a Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations Education Seminar and include acknowledgement of the Novo Nordisk Network for Healthy Populations in all associated presentations and publications.

Budget Considerations:

• LOI applications must include an estimated overall budget, as well as a short description of how the funds would be allocated to meet the project goals.

• Allowable expenses include trainee salaries, conferences and knowledge translation activities, equipment and open access journal fees, as well as additional administrative costs required to support the project. Investigator salaries are not considered allowable expense.

Letter of Intent Submission:

Please click here to access the Letter of Intent Application Form.

Completed LOI application forms and the Principal Applicant's CV (maximum 5 pages, including current appointments, grants and relevant publications) must be
received by September 1, 2022, 5:00pm EDT. Please submit CV's directly to director.novonordiskhp@utoronto.ca

For questions, please contact: director.novonordiskhp@utoronto.ca