

Frequently asked questions about College and Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF) grants

General

1. Whom should I contact if I have questions?
2. Is curriculum development allowed in a CCSIF grant?
3. Is research ethics board (REB) approval required before submission of the application?
4. I have already started working on a project. Can I still submit an application?
5. Is it appropriate to address COVID-19 impacts on the proposed research and training plan?
6. What is the timeline for the review of CCSIF applications?
7. Where can I find details about CCSIF applications that have received funding?

Roles in an application

8. What are the various roles in an application?
9. Can the applicant and project director be the same person?
10. Can the project director be listed on multiple CCSIF grant applications submitted in the same competition year?
11. If the applicant does not have a role in the intellectual direction of the project, do they still need to complete the CV module in the Convergence Portal?

Partners

12. Is there a limit to how many partner organizations can be included in an application?
13. What are the partner contribution (cash and in-kind) requirements for this funding opportunity?
14. Can the partner be an international organization?

Budget

15. How do you calculate overhead?
16. Can university students be included in a CCSIF grant application and budget?
17. Can two (or more) colleges partner in one application, and are the staff and faculty participating in the project considered co-applicants? If so, what are the means of compensating faculty, staff and students from both (or more) colleges?

18. Are food and transportation expenses eligible as incentives to participate in a research project?

19. How many pages are allowed for the Budget justification section?

Joint funding opportunities

20. Whom should I contact if I have questions related to the Mitacs-NSERC joint funding opportunity?

21. Whom should I contact if I have questions related to the CCSIF/Canada Council for the Arts joint funding opportunity?

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations

22. Where can I get more information about including EDI considerations in my proposal?

Indigenous research (IR) considerations

23. I am working with Indigenous community members in my research. How can I ensure that the work is being carried out in a respectful manner?

24. Where can I get more information about research involving Indigenous Peoples and communities?

General

1. Whom should I contact if I have questions?

For general inquiries, contact ccsif-fiscc@nserc-crsng.gc.ca.

For information on how to complete the application in the Convergence Portal, see the [Instructions for completing a CCSIF grants application](#).

For information on how to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations into the composition of research teams and into the training plan, see the [Guide to addressing equity, diversity and inclusion in College and Community Innovation program \(CCI\) grant applications](#).

If your CCSIF project involves Indigenous Peoples and communities, consult the [CCI guide for research involving Indigenous Peoples and communities](#).

2. Is curriculum development allowed in a CCSIF grant?

Projects whose primary objective is solely curriculum development are not eligible for funding under the CCSIF grants program. However, curriculum development can form one component of a project that has a research component or addresses research challenges in community innovation.

3. Is research ethics board (REB) approval required before submission of the application?

REB approval is not required before submitting the application. If the application is successful, and there are budget items requiring REB approval, approval must be obtained before the funds can be used for these expenses.

4. I have already started working on a project. Can I still submit an application?

Yes, but NSERC funds can be used only for expenses incurred after the grant has been approved.

5. Is it appropriate to address COVID-19 impacts on the proposed research and training plan?

NSERC recognizes the continued uncertainty involved in planning some research and training activities. Applicants are encouraged to prepare research and training plans based on information available when they apply. For example, if the proposed research plan involves field work that requires travel, they may describe an alternative plan if travel restrictions are in place. While reviewers will assess the feasibility of research and training plans as part of their evaluation, they are also aware that the context surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic is continuously evolving.

6. What is the timeline for the review of CCSIF applications?

CCSIF applications are due by 8:00 pm (ET) on March 1 via the Convergence Portal. Following the review of applications by the selection committee, applicants will be notified of the funding decision in May. For additional details concerning NSERC review timelines, consult the [Application deadlines and notification of decision](#) page.

7. Where can I find details about CCSIF applications that have received funding?

For details regarding competition results, consult the [NSERC funding decisions](#) page. Use the “filter items” bar to find details related to specific funding opportunities.

Roles in an application

8. What are the various roles in an application?

Applicants create and complete the application in the Convergence Portal and are responsible for administering the grant on behalf of the institution. An applicant must hold a remunerated position at an eligible Canadian college.

Participants are either co-applicants, contributors or partners who are required to complete sections of the application in the Convergence Portal.

Co-applicants are members of the research team affiliated with the college. The applicant invites them via the Convergence Portal to create an account and complete their sections in Convergence. They cannot edit application modules in the Convergence Portal.

Contributors edit the application and typically help the applicant complete the application. The applicant invites contributors via the Convergence Portal. Contributors must have a remunerated position at an eligible Canadian college but do not complete the CV module. Contributors are not included in the application once it has been submitted.

Partners are non-academic Canadian organizations from the public, private and/or not-for-profit sectors. The applicant invites the authorized contact for the partner organization via the Convergence Portal to complete the partner module. Key individuals from partner organizations who will contribute to the overall intellectual direction of the research project can be part of the research team as collaborators and must bring their organization’s resources to the project.

Collaborators are members of the research team not affiliated with the college, who bring their own resources to the collaboration. Collaborators are expected to contribute to the overall intellectual direction of the research project. Their CVs or biographical sketches (up to two pages each) may be included by the applicant in the

Supporting documents section of the application or by the authorized contact from the partner organization when invited to complete the partner sections in Convergence, under CV collaborators.

The CV collaborator document must provide the individual's name, employment/affiliations, relevant education/training, research funding received and up to five significant contributions related to the project. For Indigenous collaborators (e.g., Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Knowledge Holders), biographical sketches may include information about these individuals' life/knowledge journey, engagement with their community, and their planned participation in the proposed research. The contributions of Elders, Knowledge Keepers or Knowledge Holders to the project may include providing access to community networks, ethical guidance to researchers and advice in the interpretation of findings.

In the event that partner organizations encounter significant challenges in accessing and completing their relevant sections in the Convergence Portal, applicants may save this material within one file and upload the document as a PDF attachment in the Supporting documents (CV collaborator) section of the application.

Individuals from a not-for-profit organization requesting research salary allowance **must** include their CV.

9. Can the applicant and project director be the same person?

Yes, the applicant can also be the project director on a proposal. The project director may be the applicant or a co-applicant. This should be clearly described in the Applied research competence section of the proposal.

Colleges may submit up to five applications per competition, but each proposal should be led by a **different project director**. A new proposal may be submitted even if the proposed **project director** is already leading a CCSIF grant.

10. Can the project director be listed on multiple CCSIF grant applications submitted in the same competition year?

Each proposal should be led by a different **project director**; however, a **project director** may participate on several proposals.

11. If the applicant does not have a role in the intellectual direction of the project, do they still need to complete the CV module in the Convergence Portal?

The CV module must be completed even if the applicant will not have a role in the intellectual direction of the project. However, under the Applied research competence section, the application should mention that the applicant will have only an administrative role in the project.

Partners

12. Is there a limit to how many partner organizations can be included in an application?

There is no maximum number of partner organizations that can be involved in a CCSIF project. To include partner organizations in the application, applicants must invite each partner organization, via the Convergence Portal, to complete relevant application modules and submit a **mandatory** letter of support. Partner organizations should consult the [Partner organization instructions](#).

13. What are the partner contribution (cash and in-kind) requirements for this funding opportunity?

Partner organization(s) must provide contributions (cash and/or in-kind) that support and directly relate to the activities of the project. Although a cash contribution is not required, the proposal must include at least one partner organization that is recognized for cost-sharing under the [College and Community Innovation program partnership guidelines](#).

Organizations must participate meaningfully in the project and demonstrate their level of involvement in their letter of support. Key individuals from partner organizations who will contribute to the overall intellectual direction of the research project can be part of the research team as collaborators and must bring their organization's resources to the project. The involvement of the partner organization(s) in the design and conduct of the research and/or related activities is considered in assessing applications.

14. Can the partner be an international organization?

No. The partner organization(s) must have the capability and willingness to implement and exploit the results of the research to the benefit of the college's community and/or Canadian society.

Budget

15. How do you calculate overhead?

Overhead and administration costs equivalent to 20% of the annual grant amount are included automatically in the budget table template.

The budget table calculation takes into account the total direct cost of research and multiplies it by 25% to calculate overhead (for example, \$96,000 of total direct costs would yield an overhead amount of \$24,000, for a total grant amount of \$120,000; thus, 80% of the total amount is for direct costs and 20% is for overhead).

16. Can university students be included in a CCSIF grant application and budget?

University students (currently enrolled or recent graduates) may be hired as technical or professional staff or paid as consultants; however, they are not considered students in the application. In the CCI program, only college students currently enrolled in a program of study at the host institution can be considered students.

17. Can two (or more) colleges partner in one application, and are the staff and faculty participating in the project considered co-applicants? If so, what are the means of compensating faculty, staff and students from both (or more) colleges?

Faculty or staff from other colleges (other than the host institution) can be considered co-applicants. The applicant must invite these individuals via the Convergence Portal to complete their profiles in the Portal. There are two ways to compensate faculty, staff or students from other colleges: either the host college can [transfer funds to another participating college](#), or a participating college can invoice the host college.

18. Are food and transportation expenses eligible as incentives to participate in a research project?

For projects requiring participation studies, covering costs of food and transportation as a modest incentive is an eligible expense, provided that the college's research ethics board (REB) has approved the incentive plan (method of distribution, value of incentives, number of people receiving incentive), and the college can demonstrate proof of payment/receipt of the incentives (e.g., signed receipt, coded list of recipients, attestation of researcher and/or others involved in incentive payment).

19. How many pages are allowed for the Budget justification section?

As per the [instructions](#), three pages are allowed for the Budget justification section. Applicants must provide as much detail as possible and show how they arrived at the totals presented (i.e., show calculations).

Joint funding opportunities

20. Whom should I contact if I have questions related to the NSERC-Mitacs joint funding opportunity?

Applicants with questions related to the Mitacs Accelerate internships should contact their local [Mitacs Business Development representative](#). The NSERC application deadline is firm; therefore, you are encouraged to contact Mitacs early in the process.

21. Whom should I contact if I have questions related to the CCSIF/Canada Council for the Arts joint funding opportunity?

Applicants with general questions about the CCSIF/Canada Council for the Arts joint funding opportunity should email ccsif-fiscc@nserc-crsng.gc.ca. For questions specific to the Canada Council for the Arts and eligibility for Canada Council grants, contact SupportingArtisticPractice@canadacouncil.ca. Only applications involving an arts organization, group or collective that is eligible for Canada Council grants as a partner organization are eligible for Canada Council funding

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations

22. Where can I get more information about including EDI considerations in my proposal?

The [Guide to addressing equity, diversity and inclusion in College and Community Innovation \(CCI\) program grant applications](#) gives an overview of EDI considerations in CCI applications.

Indigenous research (IR) considerations

23. I am working with Indigenous community members in my research. How can I ensure that the work is being carried out in a respectful manner?

If your project involves Indigenous Peoples or communities, you must demonstrate how you will integrate the relevant concepts, principles and protocols for conducting respectful research with Indigenous Peoples and communities into each stage of the research process. [Consult the CCI guide for research involving Indigenous Peoples and communities](#) for full details.

24. Where can I get more information about research involving Indigenous Peoples and communities?

If your CCSIF project involves Indigenous Peoples and communities, consult the [CCI guide for research involving Indigenous Peoples and communities for more information](#).