

Health Ecosystem to Accelerate and Leverage Trials of Healthcare Innovation



Program Guide

HEALTHI Program Guide

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1. HEALTHI Contribution to Organization (HEALTHI CtO) Program Overview

In partnership with the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRCIRAP), Innovation Factory and the Synapse Consortium established the ***Hamilton Ecosystem to Accelerate and Leverage Trials of Health Innovation (HEALTHI)*** Contribution to Organization (CtO) program. Its mission is to connect Canadian-based life science firms with world-class research hospitals, including Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) and St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton, to establish connections with potential clinical collaborators and better understand the processes and requirements required to undertake a commercialization project or clinical trial.

Through HEALTHI, Canadian-based life science firms can leverage up to \$15,000 in funding to work with the research administration groups at HHS or St. Joseph's Hospital to prepare the documents required to undertake a collaborative project. Life science firms will need to provide a minimum \$2,500 cash contribution towards project costs.

Successful partnerships will accelerate commercialization efforts, enabling life science firms to further develop intellectual property, obtain critical clinical data or undertake key product testing and evaluation.

HEALTHI applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Be a Canadian, incorporated, life science firm.
- Be developing an innovative technology at TRL-6 level or above.
- Demonstrated commitment to commercializing innovation with a clear clinical application.
- Interest in undertaking a commercialization project or clinical trial with a Hamilton-based research hospital.

The HEALTHI program operates under a rolling application intake process. Companies are invited to apply by filling out an application at: www.innovationfactory.ca/funding-HEALTHI. Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2026, or until program funds have been fully committed.

2. HEALTHI Program Sponsors: Innovation Factory, Synapse and NRC-IRAP

Innovation Factory

Innovation Factory (iF) is a non-profit business accelerator, providing entrepreneurs with business services, training, mentorship, and strategic connections to help bring your disruptive technologies to market, increase revenues, attract investment, and create jobs.

Serving as the catalyst for tech innovation in the greater Hamilton area since 2011, we are driven to support:

- Entrepreneurs bring new ideas to life and to market;
- Small/Medium Enterprises (SMEs) get to the next level; and
- The Hamilton ecosystem build a dynamic culture and a community of innovation

Innovation can happen anywhere. Our goal is to make it work everywhere. We work to elevate key industry sectors including life sciences & healthcare, advanced manufacturing, clean tech, information technology, integrated mobility and social innovations.

Learn more at: www.innovationfactory.ca, or contact the HEALTHI Program Team at: lifesciences@innovationfactory.ca

Synapse Life Science Consortium

Synapse is the formal regional cluster organization for the life sciences ecosystem in the greater Hamilton region, representing more than 34,000 employees. Synapse is focused on supporting initiatives and projects that magnify the impact of collective action across the cluster ecosystem and accelerate the commercialization of life science innovation.

Synapse seeks to support all companies and institutions that make up the Hamilton life science cluster, celebrating the strengths and successes of industry leaders and new start-ups, as well as promoting the region as an attractive place to live, work and invest.

Founded in 2016, the Synapse Consortium initiative brought together leaders from anchor institutions across the Hamilton region, including both private and public sector organizations who saw significant opportunity for greater collaboration and coordination across the cluster.

Learn more at: www.synapseconsortium.com

National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP)

The National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) is a Canadian government initiative that supports the innovation and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It provides financial assistance, advisory services, and technical expertise to help businesses develop and commercialize innovative technologies. By connecting SMEs with industrial technology advisors, IRAP offers guidance in research and development, market expansion, and commercialization strategies. With its extensive network and resources, the program aims to accelerate the competitiveness of Canadian companies, fostering innovation and job creation, and helping businesses scale their operations in both domestic and international markets.

Through NRC IRAP's mandate of stimulating wealth creation through Canadian Innovation, NRC IRAP has been successful in the mission to accelerate the growth of SMEs by providing a comprehensive suite of innovation services and funding including:

- Providing value-added frontline service to clients;
- Respecting and investing in the value of people;
- Building and contributing to partnerships;
- Maintaining and enhancing technical credibility; and
- Ensuring accountability for quality service and effective use of resources

Learn more at www.nrc.canada.ca/en/support-technology-innovation.

3. HEALTHI Program Parameters

3.1 – HEALTHI Program Objectives

- HEALTHI's objective is to connect life science firms with clinical administrative resources which will guide the development of collaborations that will enable clinical trials and thus catalyze commercialization efforts. Supporting HEALTHI are two world-class research hospitals: Hamilton Health Sciences (Canada's 3rd largest hospital network) and St Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton (part of the broader St. Joseph's Healthcare hospital network). Along with McMaster University and Mohawk College, Hamilton possess a strong research environment and deep clinical expertise required for life science firms to grow and prosper.
- Through HEALTHI, participating companies develop relationships and acquire critical knowledge from clinicians and potential hospital champions that is required to scale and grow their business. Enabling these connections, Innovation Factory and its hospital partners have joined with NRC-RAP to deploy HEALTHI. Through support to globally competitive companies, HEALTHI hopes to encourage the development and adoption of home-grown intellectual property (IP) and talent, helping retain the economic and scientific value generated by innovative Canadian firms.
- We Invite life science firms with innovative technologies that are at or beyond the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 to collaborate with a clinical partner to develop all pre-trial or commercialization logistics and documents.

3.2 What funding is available?

The Government of Canada, through the NRC-IRAP, will provide up to \$15,000 through the HEALTHI program, which aims to support Canadian-based, life science firms from April 1st, 2025 – March 31st, 2026.

- Firms can access up to a maximum of \$15,000 in non-dilutive NRC-IRAP grant funding.
- The partner institutions (i.e., Hamilton Health Sciences, St. Joseph's Hospital) will attempt to match clinical champions with participating companies.
- Firms must provide a \$2,500 cash contribution.

Special Considerations:

- Stacking federal government funding is not allowed.
- Stacking provincial and municipal funding is subject to review and approval.

3.3 – Who can apply?

- A privately incorporated Canadian life science firm¹.
- Working towards commercializing an innovative technology at Technology Readiness Level Six (TRL-6: System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a simulated environment) or above.
- Demonstrated commitment to commercializing innovation with a clear clinical application.
- Eligible firms must be a client of Innovation Factory. Firms can sign-up for free with Innovation Factory [here](#).

¹ Life science firms include for-profit companies operating in the fields of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices, digital health, biomedical technologies, nutraceuticals, cosmeceuticals, and others that dedicate their efforts to creating products to improve the lives of organisms.

3.4 – What costs are eligible?

Innovation Factory will reimburse the clinical partner (i.e., Hamilton Health Sciences or St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton) up to \$15,000 at the completion of the work once an attestation of work and final report has been reviewed and approved by both Innovation Factory and NRC-IRAP. Costs associated with the project include portions of salary for clinical coordinators and research administrators who provide assistance on drafting all project protocols and supporting documentation in preparation for a commercialization project or clinical trial. Overhead charges by hospital administration will not be charged for any HEALTHI Collaboration.

Project costs are subject to approval by the Innovation Factory team and must be auditable. If you have questions about eligible costs, please reach out to the HEALTHI Program Team for more information.

4. HEALTHI Program Application Process

4.1 – The HEALTHI Process

- Step 1: Complete a HEALTHI application [form](#)
- Step 2: The HEALTHI Program Team will review your application within 1-2 weeks before scheduling an introduction meeting to explore project suitability and alignment with HEALTHI Program goals.
- Step 3: The HEALTHI Program Team will work with hospital partners to determine capacity and capabilities to help initiate a HEALTHI project.
- Step 4: The applicant and HEALTHI Program Team will meet with NRC-IRAP program sponsor, to review the proposed project and identify opportunities to leverage additional NRC programmatic support.
- Step 5: Applicant will work with hospital partner to draft HEALTHI contract to define the scope of work and project deliverables.
- Step 6: Submit the drafted contract for review by the HEALTHI Program Team. Upon approval, fully execute the signed contract.
- Step 7: Execute HEALTHI project with hospital partner. Submit attestation of work completion and final report to HEALTHI Program Team stating that all project deliverables and milestones have successfully completed and providing feedback on the HEALTHI project.

If you have any questions during your application process, please feel free to reach out to the HEALTHI Program Team.

4.2 - Deadlines and timelines

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Project grants for this program will be approved until March 31st, 2026, or until all funds have been committed.

5. Program Administration

5.1 – Project contracts

A signed project contract, outlining the scope of work and activities to be performed, is required for every HEALTHI program. A contract template has been created by Innovation Factory to expedite the contracting process.

- There is no maximum or minimum required project length.
- Funding will be released on a reimbursement basis after the attestation of work completed and final report has been submitted by the hospital partner.

5.2 – Reporting requirements

HEALTHI grant recipients will meet with the HEALTHI Program Team on an *ad hoc* basis to provide an update on the project progress. A final report detailing the successful completion of the project deliverables, attestation of the work completed, and submission of all claims will be due at the end of the project. An attestation of work completed and final report template will be provided to the life science firm and hospital partner to complete.

The life science firm will also agree to report back to the HEALTHI Program Team one year and two years following the completion of the project. The HEALTHI team will request basic company data required to measure the success of the program.

5.3 – Protection of intellectual property

Coverage and treatment of intellectual property generated through the execution of a HEALTHI project will be aligned with the Innovation Factory IP Policies (available upon request).

Applicants should clearly mark as “proprietary” any information within their application or within the drafted protocol documents that they deem to be a trade secret or proprietary information. Proprietary information can include details regarding the applicant(s), their financial information, and their project. This information is to be maintained as confidential and will not be shared on public sites. Proprietary information found within applications will be used or disclosed only for the purposes of project evaluation and review.

6. Supplementary Information

6.1 – Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act

The HEALTHI Program is subject to the federal [Access to Information Act](#) and [Privacy Act](#).

6.2 – Underrepresentation balance (EDI)

Synapse and Innovation Factory encourage the participation and engagement of life science firms from underrepresented groups to encourage diversity among HEALTHI Program grant recipients.

6.3 – Public website

Information about the HEALTHI Program and how to apply can be found [here](#).

6.4 – Contact information

Please email the HEALTHI team with any questions: lifesciences@innovationfactory.ca