

CALL FOR APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

RCMP OCCUPATIONAL CULTURE, HELP-SEEKING AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Competition number: ATLAS-2627-02

Guidelines

Please refer to the [Atlas Institute Research Funding Guidelines](#), which provide further information on eligibility, submission expectations, adjudication process, funding process, SGBA+ requirements, and engaging with persons with lived and living expertise requirements.

Important dates

The below dates pertain to the full *Application for Funding* submission:

Application open: October 26, 2026

Application close: December 7, 2026

Anticipated notice of decision: February 2027

Description of topic area

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members are exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events and occupational stressors across their careers, and research has identified important barriers to seeking mental health care among police and other public safety personnel.^{1,2} Studies involving RCMP members and cadets suggest that stigma, concerns about how help-seeking may be perceived by colleagues, organizational and structural factors, mental health knowledge and service experiences can influence intentions and decisions to seek support.^{1,3} Research also suggests that occupational culture can reinforce expectations of strength, toughness and self-reliance, which may make acknowledging mental health concerns or seeking care more difficult for some members.^{1,2} At the same time, evidence regarding which interventions most effectively and sustainably reduce stigma and improve engagement with mental health services remains limited, creating an important opportunity for further research.^{3,4}

This priority is also grounded in what Atlas hears directly from the RCMP Veteran community. Through its embedded Lived Expertise team, Strategic Reference Group and engagement with current and former RCMP members, Atlas hears about the ways occupational culture and experiences during service can continue to shape attitudes toward mental health and help-seeking after service. Atlas has also completed a dialogue series with RCMP community members, providing opportunities to hear directly about their experiences, priorities, and support needs. These community perspectives, considered alongside the existing evidence base, point to a need to better understand how RCMP occupational culture influences help-seeking after service, how these experiences may vary across members and contexts, and what interventions, approaches, or system changes can reduce stigma and support timely, sustained engagement in mental health care.

Objectives and eligible research areas

This research funding opportunity will support a two-year project examining how RCMP occupational culture influences help-seeking behaviours after service, and which interventions are most effective in reducing stigma and improving engagement in mental health care. The intent is deliberately broad to support a range of research questions, methodological approaches and areas of inquiry.

1. Burns C, Buchanan M. Factors that influence the decision to seek help in a police population. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2020 Sep;17(18):6891..
2. Ricciardelli, R., Carleton, R. N., Mooney, T., & Cramm, H. (2020). "Playing the system": Structural factors potentiating mental health stigma, challenging awareness, and creating barriers to care for Canadian public safety personnel. *Health*, 24(3), 259-278.
3. Krakauer RL, Stelnicki AM, Carleton RN. Examining mental health knowledge, stigma, and service use intentions among public safety personnel. *Frontiers in psychology*. 2020 May 29;11:949..
4. Carleton RN, Krtzig GP, Sauer-Zavala S, Neary JP, Lix LM, Fletcher AJ, Afifi TO, Brunet A, Martin R, Hamelin KS, Teckchandani TA. Study protocol-the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) study: Protocol for a prospective investigation of mental health risk and resilience factors. *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada: Research, Policy and Practice*. 2022 Aug;42(8):319.

Projects may examine any aspect of the relationship between RCMP occupational culture, post-service help-seeking, stigma and engagement with mental health care, including, but not limited to, norms and expectations developed during service; perceptions of strength, resilience, self-reliance, confidentiality, trust and fitness for duty; peer and leadership influences; identity and adjustment to life after service; changes in social connection, routine, purpose and sources of support after leaving the RCMP; the continued influence of occupational culture and experiences after service; recognition of mental health needs; attitudes toward formal and informal supports; barriers to initiating or continuing care; and factors that facilitate help-seeking and engagement with mental health care. Research may focus on identifying and characterizing cultural influences and barriers, examining their relationship with help-seeking and mental health service engagement, evaluating existing stigma-reduction or help-seeking interventions, or developing and testing promising approaches to improve engagement in care.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the diversity of current and former RCMP members and the ways occupational culture and help-seeking experiences may differ across demographic, service-related, geographic, health and social circumstances. Projects should meaningfully engage former RCMP members and, where relevant, their Families throughout the research process and should clearly describe how findings could inform practice, policy, programs, services, organizational approaches, or future intervention development.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the topic area broadly and should not be discouraged from applying if their proposed research does not align precisely with the areas of inquiry outlined above. Priority will be given to proposals that clearly demonstrate a need grounded in the experiences, priorities, or knowledge of the Veteran and Family community and make a strong case for how the proposed research will address that need.

Funding amount

The total funding available for this opportunity is up to \$75,000 CAD.

Eligibility to apply

- The Principal Applicant must be an independent researcher affiliated with a Canadian post-secondary institution whose appointment continues until the conclusion of the funding period
- **OR** an individual affiliated with an Indigenous non-governmental organization in Canada with a research or knowledge mobilization mandate
- **OR** an individual affiliated with a Veteran/Veteran Family non-governmental organization in Canada with a research or knowledge mobilization mandate.
- The Principal Applicant must have completed an SGBA+ course with proof of certification from a Canadian institution

How to apply

The Atlas Institute uses an email application process. A complete application includes the full *Application for Funding*, a completed *Conflict of Interest* form, and an up-to-date CV, submitted as a single PDF to <mailto:atlasresearch@theroyal.ca>, referencing the competition number in the subject line of the email.

Checklist:

- Completed *Application for Funding*
- *Conflict of Interest* form
- CV of Principal Applicant



Adjudication

Applicants have six weeks to submit the *Application for Funding*. All *Applications for Funding* are adjudicated by an external Scientific Review Committee, based on standardized scoring criteria.