

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL GUIDELINES: RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS FUNDING

## PURPOSE OF RESEARCH FUNDING

The Atlas [Strategic Plan](#) includes four strategic pillars:

1. **Prevent and prepare:** Work with partners to strengthen upstream prevention and support for Veteran and Family health and well-being.
2. **Improve care and support:** Increase capacity across Canada for more accessible, culturally competent, trauma-informed care and support.
3. **Engage and inform:** Build trusted relationships with Veterans and Families, engage them in all key Atlas Institute projects and processes, and empower them with curated, trustworthy information that supports their health and well-being journey.
4. **Expand what we know:** Partner with Veterans, their Families, and leading researchers to explore new horizons for care and support, and actively mobilize that information widely.

One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to **build trusted relationships and grow collaborations with researchers and Veteran and Family groups across Canada** to continually explore and advance key research questions related to health and well-being, the reconceptualization of trauma and traumatic stress, including those related to minorities among military and Veterans, and novel and holistic complementary therapies.

## ELIGIBILITY OF FUNDING

- 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
- Other criteria as necessary, as specified in the call for *Expression of Interest*

## Ineligible/incomplete applications

All submissions are considered final and no changes will be permitted after submission. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure their application is eligible and complete; no appeal process will be offered. All applications and any additionally required documents are to be sent to [atlasresearch@theroyal.ca](mailto:atlasresearch@theroyal.ca) for submission.

## Multiple applications

Applicants may submit only one (1) application as either Principal Applicant or Co-Principal Applicant per funding opportunity.

## Submission deadlines

Submissions received after the application deadline will not be considered; there will be no appeal process (extensions will not be granted). It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure their application is submitted by the indicated deadline.

# ADJUDICATION PROCESS

The Atlas Institute's research priorities have been developed through findings from our *Research & Knowledge Gap Analysis* and through consultations with the Veteran and Family community, including input from the Atlas Institute reference groups, which include representation from: Service Providers, Researchers, Veterans and Veteran Families.

The Atlas Institute adjudication process follows a two-step approach:

- 1. Expression of Interest:** Applicants are first asked to submit an *Expression of Interest*, which will provide a brief overview of the organizational relevance, study purpose, study summary, main study outcomes, and impact of the study. *Expressions of Interests* will be reviewed by an Atlas Institute internal review team assessing relevance to the funding objective and overall impact. All members of the internal review team will review and sign the *Conflict of Interest* form; if there is a declared conflict of interest, the member will recuse themselves from the review process. All successful applicants will be asked to submit a full *Application for Research Funding* and will be notified via email. From the time of notification, applicants have six weeks to submit the full *Application for Research Funding*. Applicants who are not successful will be withdrawn from the competition and will be notified of this decision via email. All applicants, including those withdrawn from the competition can request to see their scoring report. All Applicants will be notified of their status within 30 days of submission.
- 2. Application for Research Funding:** Applicants who have been notified of their successful *Expression of Interest* application will be invited to provide a full *Application for Research Funding*, where a more comprehensive and detailed description of the proposed research will be requested. Descriptions of general project information, study objectives, lay summary, study outcomes, study design, study participants, sample size, recruitment strategy, project milestones and timelines, project budget, SGBA+ plan, lived and living expertise engagement plan, knowledge mobilization plan, and impact of study will be required. *Applications for Research Funding* will be reviewed by an external review team, hereby known as the Scientific Review

Committee, comprised of experts in the field of Veteran and Veteran Family mental health. If a specific application falls outside of the scope of expertise of the sitting Scientific Review Committee members, an external reviewer will be asked to provide their score on an ad hoc basis. Applications for Research Funding will be reviewed using predetermined scoring criteria with a minimum of two reviewers per application. Krippendorff's alpha score will be used to measure interrater reliability<sup>1</sup>. Values below 0.7<sup>1</sup> will require a third internal reviewer consultation. The top three applications with the highest score will be brought back to the Atlas Institute internal review team for final discussion and decision-making. The successful applicant will be notified via email. All other applications will be withdrawn from the competition and will be notified via email. All applicants, including those withdrawn from the competition can request to see their scoring report. Funds will be distributed to successful Applicants via *Collaborative Research Agreements*, drafted by the Atlas Institute. All applicants will be notified of their status within 30 days of submission. The successful applicants name, institution(s), and project details will be published on the Atlas Institute website.

- a. The external review team assesses the Applications for Research Funding using the following criteria:
  - i. Feasibility
  - ii. Methodology
  - iii. Sex and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+)
  - iv. Engagement with Persons with Lived Expertise
  - v. Overall Impact
  - vi. Knowledge Mobilization

## FUNDING

### Distribution of funds

As the Atlas Institute is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Canada, the Atlas Institute does not issue grants. Funds are distributed via *Collaborative Research Agreements*, drafted by the Atlas Institute.

### Third parties

If appropriate, the Atlas Institute permits funding to be distributed to third parties, however this arrangement must be specified in the *Collaborative Research Agreement*.

## Indirect/overhead costs

As the Atlas Institute is a qualifying not-for-profit organization, it exclusively receives funds from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). As such, research funding provided by the Atlas Institute is to be spent directly on research to improve the wellbeing of Veterans and their Families. The Atlas Institute does not cover the salaries of the Principal Applicant, or any co-investigators appointed to their respective university. The Atlas Institute does not cover overhead/indirect costs associated with research. Research overhead or indirect costs include expenses that are required to support a research project but may not be specifically attributable to the research project. This may include but is not limited to:

- Building space and utilities
- University library access
- Hazardous waste disposal
- Occupational safety
- Liability insurance
- Legal and administrative services

## Collaborative Research Agreement

*Collaborative Research Agreements* will be prepared by that Atlas Institute with guidance from legal consultation. The *Collaborative Research Agreements* provide binding clauses regarding collaboration, representations and warranties, publications, intellectual property, confidentiality, privacy, indemnification and limitation of liability, termination, notices, and forces majeure. Responsibilities of Parties, work products and timelines, as well as the invoicing and payment schedule will be outlined in the Schedule 'A' of the Collaborative Research Agreement.

## **SEX & GENDER BASED ANALYSIS +**

The Atlas Institute shares a commitment with the Government of Canada to using Sex and Gender Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) in all work that we do and fund. An SGBA+ framework ensures that research undertaken at the Atlas Institute aims to better understand the way in which determinants of mental health, such as ethnicity or socioeconomic status, interact with sex and gender to contribute to certain risk factors and/or outcomes.

Successful applicants must indicate in the Application for Research Funding how they plan to incorporate SGBA+ in their research. If SGBA+ is not feasible within the proposed research, written rationale is required.

SGBA+ strategies will be reviewed by an SGBA+ expert (member of the external review team). Throughout the duration of the project, during scheduled update meetings with the Atlas Institute team, SGBA+ strategies will be continuously monitored.

All Applicants must provide proof of completion of an SGBA+ course from a reputable Canadian Institution upon application.

## ENGAGING WITH LIVED EXPERTISE

Community based research (CBR) (patient centred research/participatory action research/community-based participatory research) sets a standard of engagement whereby community members are actively and equitably involved in each phase of the research process, beyond just the role of participant. In the Veteran and Veteran Family context, CBR is an active process where Veteran communities and community members are partners in the research process<sup>1</sup>, engage in the various stages of the process, and share in decision making<sup>2,3</sup>. Engaging in this way serves to enhance the capacity of the research team by integrating the expertise associated with lived experience of Veterans and their Family Members. Ultimately, knowledge and understanding can be co-developed through this partnership between researcher and Veteran communities.

Although not all research projects carried out by or through the Atlas Institute will necessarily be strictly CBR, the principles behind this approach are engrained in the research conducted by or through the Atlas Institute funding. As such, engaging Veterans and Veteran family members throughout the lifespan of the funded project is a **requirement**. Applicants must indicate how they will engage Veterans and Veteran Families in their application and must indicate whether they require support from the Atlas Institute to engage community members. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the *[Atlas Institute Protocol for Engaging with Veterans and Family Members](#)*.

## FRENCH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

As outlined in the Atlas Institute's contribution agreement, the successful applicant must ensure that participants are able to participate the study in the official languages (French or English) of their choice. Costs associated with the French language offerings should be outlined in the submitted budget. Applicants are able to apply to the funding opportunity in French. Word counts are extended to accommodate French submissions.

## RESEARCH TABLE

Atlas funded researchers are required to participate in at Atlas led research table. The intent of this group is to collectively share updates on their research and to foster an environment of shared learning in the field of Veteran and Veteran Family mental health and well-being research. Members will attend an annual symposium where they will present their research to date to the Veteran and Veteran family community. The symposium will be organized by the Atlas Institute – travel and accommodations will be covered by the Atlas Institute.

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1. Haynes, E. N. (2015). Community-based participatory research: An overview for application in Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs research. In C. P. Baird & D. K. Harkins (Eds.), *Airborne hazards related to deployment* (pp. 239–244). Fort Sam Houston, TX: Office of the Surgeon General.
  2. Bird, M., Ouellette, C., Whitmore, C., Li, L., Nair, K., McGillion, M. H., ... & Carroll, S. L. (2020). Preparing for patient partnership: a scoping review of patient partner engagement and evaluation in research. *Health Expectations*, 23(3), 523-539.
  3. Hyde, J., Wendleton, L., Fehling, K., Whittle, J., True, G., Hamilton, A., & Ono, S. S. (2018). *Strengthening Excellence in Research through Veteran Engagement (SERVE): Toolkit for Veteran Engagement in Research (Version 1): Veterans Health Administration. Health Services Research and Development.*