**Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute Inc. (CHEO RI) Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF)**

Link to the Program : <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/crcef-fucrc/index-eng.aspx#instructions>.

**Statement:**

The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute Inc. (“CHEO RI”) is committed to building and sustaining a culture that promotes equity, diversity and inclusion within our scholarly and leadership environments for researchers, students and staff. We continually work to identify and remove barriers and obstacles that limit equitable access and opportunities. The CHEO RI strongly supports initiatives that encourage the participation of the five designated groups (women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and members of the LGBTQ community), as defined in the Employment Equity Act, as well as other groups.

**Purpose:**

The CHEO RI EDI strategy focuses on improving the decision-making process, transparency and monitoring of equity and diversity in the management of CRCEF funding. This strategy supports CHEO RI in making progress towards addressing the needs of the members of the five designated groups (FDGs)—women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, members of visible minorities and members of the LGBTQ community—in obtaining access to the program and benefiting from the program objectives – retaining research personnel adversely affected through the COVID-19 Pandemic and providing support to maintain essential research functions and support research ramp-up costs.

1. **Limit the impact of unconscious bias and systemic barriers**
	1. Training: To limit unconscious biases and ensure they are not likely to influence decision-making, all members of the CHEO RI decision-making committee received unconscious bias training in the form of the following [online training module](https://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/bias/module-eng.aspx): <https://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/bias/module-eng.aspx>. Research administrators involved in the distribution of funds as well as recipients of the funds will also be strongly encouraged to take the training.
	2. Open and transparent communication: CHEO RI ensured that the CRCEF program information was widely communicated through various means (i.e. briefing note, email, news bulletin and webinar). The information was shared widely throughout the organization -- to senior and executive level officials, research administrators, researchers and their research personnel across all programs of the CHEO RI. Three main points of contact (i.e. Program-related, HR-related and Finance-related) were identified within the CHEO RI to answer questions or concerns in a timely fashion. In addition, the CHEO RI established and communicated to all personnel, prompt, effective, and establishing confidential channels to address EDI concerns and complaints and provided the leader’s name for each specific sector.
	3. Implementation of evidenced-based processes and measures: CHEO RI received its allocation of funds under the CRCEF based on a dataset (i.e. CAUBO – Canadian Association of University Business Officers) and allocation formula using the same methodology as used by this program. This process was widely communicated through a Webinar presentation and the slides were shared afterwards for further consultation or transfer to other colleagues. A formal agreement was put in place between CHEO RI and uOttawa outlining the distribution process and reporting requirements linked to the CRCEF funding for each of the stages. Within the individual institutions, **Stage 1** funds were allocated in accordance with program eligibility.

To cover the cases where need may exceed the funds provided (**Stage 1 and 2**), the EDI decision-making committees within CHEO RI focussed on ensuring all potential expenses were reimbursed by providing standardized central resources and customized support for each researcher to maximize uptake of the awards. **For Stage 3** – Research Maintenance and Ramp-up Costs: a prioritized list was identified, based on the principles outlined in this document.

1. **Safeguards to ensure that neither an individual’s increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 nor child/family care responsibilities is an issue in receiving funds**
	1. Pro-active measures to avoid exclusion and misinformation: In late March 2020, the Chief Financial Officer began providing guidance to management on wage support for research personnel and students. The purpose of the discussions was to identify the various opportunities for funding assistance and to identify allocation methods for the distribution of any funds received from Government assistance programs.
	2. Creation of a CHEO RI [Research Restart Taskforce](https://research.uottawa.ca/resources/remobilizing-research-covid-19) (RRT). This task force is charged with assessing the immediate needs of the research community and organizing the remobilization of research, while taking in to account specific local contexts and constraints. The RRT ensured flexibility to allow researchers and their teams the ability to work shifts in order to maintain low capacity needed to meet physical distancing requirements. The Chief Operating Officer with the support of the RRT has implemented a staged approach to restarting research as follows; Stage 0 – planning for reopening, ensuring adequate PPE, cleaning, signage, reporting/attestations from researchers were in place. Stage 1 allowed 30% staff/researchers capacity/occupancy. Stage 2 permitted 50% capacity / occupancy.
	3. Implementation of EDI decision-making committees within CHEO RI: The CEO and Scientific Director appointed a three-member committee to serve as the EDI-decision making committee for the CRCEF program. The Committee will be part of the CHEO RI governance structure and includes representation from individuals from various backgrounds (i.e. in terms of gender, ethnic background, occupation and linguistic profiles). It held its first meeting to guide the decision-making process for funding distribution.

**3. Safeguards to ensure that the decision-making process values Indigenous ways of knowing as well as those focused on gender, race or minority status.**

3.1 Alignment with CHEO RI Values: The Committee aimed to ensure that allocation of the CRCEF funds align with the EDI values and activities identified of the CHEO RI. As part of the CHEO RI’s Strategic Planning Process, the organization will be revisiting its values to ensure that its goals include inclusivity.

3.2 Reaching out to key individuals across the institute: Communication was sent to Directors of CHEO RI thematic programs, advising them of the Program.

**Post-award management and reporting**

CHEO RI will monitor progress and report on success through the following activities:

* To support EDI institutional data collection, the CHEO RI will request that researchers who receive Stage 1 Wage Support funds participate in the CHEO RI “Count Me In” self-identification survey, and that they encourage those staff and students to participate as well. Increased participation in the survey will be monitored.
* To provide a clear system for individuals to safely and anonymously voice EDI concerns.
* Human Resources will: a) conduct a follow up debrief with faculty administrators at the CHEO RI to determine if they identified barriers during Stage 1 program administration; b) consult informally with at least two designated groups at the CHEO RI; c) actively monitor and respond to complaints.
* The CHEO RI will complete all CRCEF reporting requirements (for Stages 1 and 3), including providing any EDI-related information collected by its affiliated institutions.

### Eligible expenses

For all 3 stages see here: <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/crcef-fucrc/index-eng.aspx#description>

#### Stage 3 – Research maintenance and ramp-up costs

Further information will be made available at a later date.

Eligible expenses include **costs incurred by November 15, 2020**, and associated with the following:

* Cost incurred associated with maintaining essential research-related activities during the pandemic that are exceptional and incremental to those already covered by existing sources of funds, funded at up to 75%. This includes:
	+ animal and specimen care through the crisis period;
	+ maintenance of equipment, software, cohorts, datasets, including warranties, licenses and service contracts;
	+ technological equipment for remote access to maintain assets; and
	+ safety equipment for personnel dedicated to maintenance.
* Costs incurred associated with full ramp-up of research activities, as physical distancing measures are eased and research activities can resume. Only costs that are exceptional and incremental to those already covered by existing sources of funds will be supported, at up to 75%. Eligible expenses include those incurred at the project level and associated with:
	+ re-organizing the research environment and activities;
	+ additional costs to bring the research back to its pre-pandemic level, including experiments or related to the restart of collections and datasets (e.g., population-based, environmental);
	+ re-scheduling and restarting human and clinical trials;
	+ exceptional costs to access special facilities, platforms and resources, knowledge transfer meetings and workshops;
	+ restarting, reassembling and safety checks of equipment and facilities;
	+ reacquiring lost and donated laboratory and field supplies and equipment, reagents, perishable materials, laboratory animal and other living specimens; and
	+ personal protective equipment and related items for research personnel.