



## SEED GRANTS: 2022 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### Background

TRANSFORM Heart Failure is an interdisciplinary strategic research network that was formed to confront the staggering health, economic, and societal burdens and disparities that exist in access to high-quality heart failure care. New approaches and models of care are needed, with promising indications that technological advances in digital medicine and remote healthcare monitoring will enable proactive, personalized, and decentralized solutions that also empower patients to become more active in their own health.

Our initiative fosters collaboration and integration of various disciplinary research and training approaches: technology innovation and implementation, basic science, heart failure medicine, data analytics and artificial intelligence, health technology assessment, Indigenous health, and engagement of people with lived experience. Together, we aim to create both a translational pipeline of innovative approaches and an interdisciplinary community sharing a mindset and commitment to implement these solutions in a respectful and collaborative fashion appropriate to diverse communities and values.

### Seed Grants

TRANSFORM HF is offering seed grants to encourage, foster, and support members of our community working collaboratively on research and project proposals that align with our initiative's goals and approaches.

**One \$70,000 grant is available** for the 2022 competition.

Research Themes:

1. Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in heart failure.
2. Data science innovation in heart failure prevention, treatment, or care.
3. Digital health and heart failure (including virtual health, point-of-care testing, implantables, sensors, wearables and apps).

*Note: TRANSFORM HF will also have two \$60,000 grants available in the University of Toronto's EMHSeed/XSeed 2023 competition, launching in January 2023.*

**Duration: February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – April 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

### Eligibility

Principal Applicants must be investigators affiliated with TRANSFORM HF and the University of Toronto (U of T) and/or institutions within the Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN). Eligible PIs include all professorial staff eligible to hold research funding at the [University of Toronto](#) or external funding partners.

As this competition is intended to extend the breadth and reach of the TRANSFORM HF network, teams that expand the TRANSFORM HF network outside the U of T and TASHN hospitals will be prioritized and up to 50% of award funding may be provided to external collaborator/investigator(s) outside U of T/TASHN.

Applicants and collaborators must be members of TRANSFORM HF (to learn about joining the TRANSFORM HF network, please visit our [website](#)).

Applicants with previous TRANSFORM HF funding must have satisfied all conditions of existing funding as outlined in the Acceptance Form to qualify for additional/new funding.

### Application requirements

Please complete the [Application Form](#), also available on the [Opportunities page](#) of the TRANSFORM HF website.

Applicants must briefly describe their project, the research theme it aligns with (listed below), collaborators, and its potential impact on the health outcomes and quality of life of people living with heart failure. **Applications must bring together a diversity of perspective and disciplines in developing digital health innovations and projects, ideally deepening and expanding the TRANSFORM HF network and its potential impact.**

### Themes of research proposal

*Applicants should align their proposal with the most relevant theme to ensure the greatest opportunity for success.*

#### **Theme 1: Equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in heart failure.**

Explore and address health inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including urban Indigenous communities, racialized communities, or other underrepresented communities of individuals. Research will specifically include and promote an inclusive, culturally-safe, and meaningful engagement with underrepresented or other groups inequitably affected by heart failure and poorer health outcomes and quality of life. See U of T's VPRI [website](#) for definitions and resources on the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research and innovation.

#### **Theme 2: Data science innovation in heart failure prevention, treatment, or care.**

Leverage data science and statistical techniques (e.g., data mining, data visualization, artificial intelligence and machine learning) using large and complex data sets to enable precise exploration and analysis of the genetic, developmental, behavioural, contextual, environmental, and societal factors of heart health and well-being for individuals and populations.

#### **Theme 3: Digital health and heart failure.**

Explore the digital transformation of heart failure prevention, diagnosis, and care, including the role of technologies such as virtual care, remote monitoring, smart wearables, apps, and data platforms. Develop and apply digital health solutions that promote data-based heart failure diagnostic and treatment decisions, therapeutics, remote monitoring and self-management, and person-centered care as well as health system design and delivery.

### Additional considerations for collaboration/project/research proposal development

Regardless of the research theme, teams are encouraged to incorporate sex and gender-based analysis and reporting, patient and community engagement, Indigenous knowledges and research methods, and EDI into their projects as appropriate. Such considerations are integral to realizing the vision of TRANSFORM HF, which is built upon a foundation of diversity, health equity, and inclusion.

#### **Sex and gender-based analysis and reporting**

Applicants are required to integrate sex and gender-based analysis (SGBA) in their project or research design. Any application that does not incorporate SGBA must provide a rationale for

why it would not be relevant to the project. All applicants are strongly encouraged to complete CIHR's Institute of Gender and Health training modules: [Online Training Modules](#).

### Patient and community engagement

TRANSFORM HF is committed to engaging patients in their care and in decision-making to improve the quality and safety of care across the hospital. Applicants are required to illustrate how they intend to meaningfully engage patients in their project. Any application that does not engage patients must provide a rationale for why it would not be relevant. TRANSFORM HF can support recruitment of patients, caregivers, and family members if the applicant does not have access.

Community-oriented initiatives must ensure community engagement in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health programs and technologies. In particular, projects involving Indigenous organizations and communities must develop meaningful relationships with Indigenous people and communities, ensuring a sense of accountability, reflexive allyship, and “an ability to step aside and allow Indigenous people to lead.”<sup>1</sup>

### Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Applicants must illustrate how their project will align with and potentially advance TRANSFORM HF's commitment to EDI, whether in the composition of the research team, EDI training of research team members, or the consideration of EDI in research/project design. For more information, consult the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion resources](#) available through U of T's Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation.

### Evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **A clear and impactful overarching goal:** High quality research proposal with a clear end goal, such as a key finding, a compelling prototype, or a persuasive data set that paves the way for larger funded projects.
- **Excellence in research:** Project's scientific excellence, novelty, and ability to solve an important, unsolved problem; evidence of established or emerging leadership of research team.
- **Alignment with the research theme and overarching vision and goals of TRANSFORM HF.**
- **Collaboration:** Demonstration of how the project will increase breadth and depth of collaboration/collaborators in the TRANSFORM HF network; extent to which the team represents diverse perspectives and disciplines. Teams that expand the TRANSFORM HF network outside the U of T and TASHN hospitals will be prioritized.
- **Inclusion:** Appropriate and explicit incorporation of SGBAR, patient and community engagement, and EDI as appropriate.
- **Gateway to major funded partnership or translation:** Extent to which project lays foundation for major funding opportunity, partnership, commercialization, or other significant translation of its findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Hyett S, Marjerrison, S, Gabel, C. Improving health research among Indigenous Peoples in Canada. CMAJ 2018 May 22;190:E616-21. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.171538.

## Application submission

Please submit the completed [Application Form](#) by **December 5, 2022 at 5:00pm EST** as a single PDF document via email to [info@transformhf.ca](mailto:info@transformhf.ca). Receipt of complete/on-time submissions will be acknowledged. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Applicants are asked to complete an [anonymous survey](#) to ensure that our programs include considerations for EDI. The questions are voluntary, and the information collected will not be used to evaluate any individual or application. It is collected and held in the Office of the Director of EDI within VPRI U of T and shared as de-identified, aggregated information to inform TRANSFORM HF's reporting and best practices.

Consult the [TRANSFORM HF website](#) for further information or email [info@transformhf.ca](mailto:info@transformhf.ca) with any questions.

Applicants will be notified of the results of the competition by the end of January 2023.

Successful applicants may be featured in TRANSFORM HF communications and reporting, and additional supports to the collaboration may be available as it progresses.