THE WESTERN RESEARCH HUB FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH
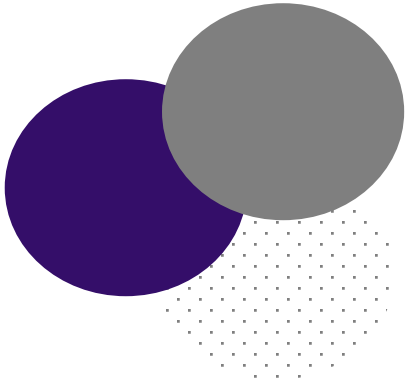
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SERIES

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Land Acknowledgment

Grant Review 101: The Basics of Peer Reviewing Grant Applications

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Objectives

1. Understand how the process of peer review of grant applications works and how you might approach it

2. Become familiar with some of the terms related to grant applications and peer review

3. Learn from patient partners who have peer reviewed grant applications

A bit about me

- I'm an analytical chemist by training
- I live with rheumatoid arthritis
- I help people and organizations work with patients as partners

What is peer review of grant applications?

- Grant application
  - A submission written by a researchers as an ask to fund their proposed research project

- Peer review
  - A process used to review applications submitted for funding
  - Applications are assigned to reviewers with the required experience and/or expertise (individual or collective) to assess the applications based on specific objectives and evaluation criteria
  - Reviewers might be academics and non-academics (e.g., patient partners and community members and industry, government representatives)

An overview of the process (generally)

Assigned applications provided to reviewers

Submit scores (sometimes before the meeting)

Funding recommendations are made

You may be asked about your experiences in the process

Read applications, score them & write comments

Participate in the peer review meeting

Comments and results are provided to applicants

Some terms and principles

Conflict of interest – Your external interests or engagements appear to compete or conflict with your peer review responsibilities, and could be seen as furthering your interests (or the interests of others you know), or giving an unfair advantage to you or to others

Confidential – All materials and any discussions about these materials

Constructive – Intended to help contribute to making the research approach stronger/more robust and improve outputs and outcomes

https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50841.html

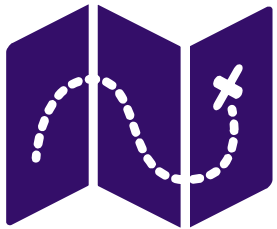# Some more terms in the application itself…

People doing the work:

- Principal Investigator or Principal Applicant
- Co-Investigator or Co-Applicant
- Trainee
- Collaborator
- Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

Other terms:

- Sex and gender
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

How you might approach your review: Getting started

- Get familiar with things: instructions for reviewers, instructions for applicants, the application form itself

- Ask questions if you're unclear about the process or expectations

- Read all of your assigned applications altogether (if you can)

- Read the lay summary or plain language summary of each application first

How you might approach your review:
A well-written application

- Is clear – you can follow the story the person is presenting
- Explains what the problem is, why the proposed research is important, and what 'gap' this fills in the current science or evidence/knowledge
- Has some some white space and some graphics
- Addresses all sections required and each point in those sections that is required
- Has clear headings
- Has well-explained ideas and sections that don't leave you with more questions

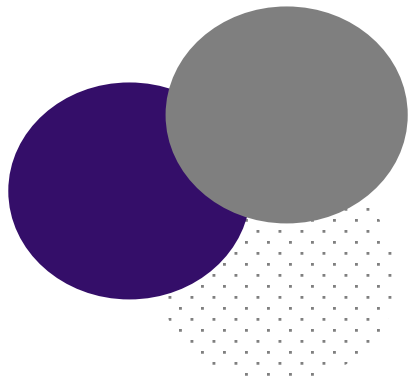# How you might approach your review: A well-written application

- Appears 'doable' or realistic (might be called 'feasible') in the timeframe proposed

- Explains what the deliverables and outputs of the work will be

- Has a justified budget that seems reasonable

- Describes the team members: who they are, their roles and expertise

- Has letters of support that clearly state what the person or organization's role is in the application, why they are the expert to do that role (i.e. what they bring), what parts of the application they'll be involved in, and this information matches what is in the application
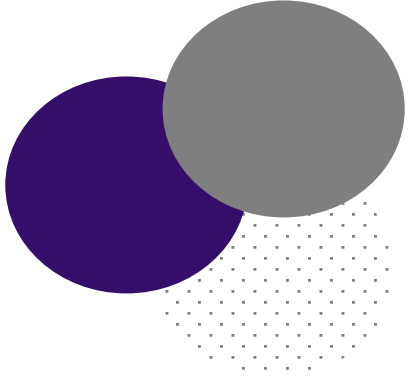
Take-aways

1. Peer review of grant applications is a structured way for experts to provide input and constructive comments to grant applicants

2. Patient partners can bring valuable, complementary perspectives to peer review of grant applications

Let's hear from patient partners who have experiences with peer reviewing grant applications

Thank you - ask any questions you'd like!

Feel free to reach out:

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