

Call for Applications: One-Year Pilot Randomized Trial Funding Opportunity

Overview

POPCORN (Pediatric Outcome imProvement through COordination of Research Networks) is pleased to announce a Call for Applications for a one-year funding opportunity for pilot Randomized Trials (RTs), supporting the launch of new Canadian trials and the expansion of existing international trials into Canada.

This funding opportunity supports the launch of innovative pilot RTs in pediatric and perinatal health which that have the potential to contribute meaningfully to POPCORN's Purpose and Vision (<https://www.popcornpediatrics.ca/>). Two different opportunities are available:

- For the piloting of new Canadian RTs, a maximum of **five projects** will be selected to receive **up to \$200,000** in funding.
- For the expansion of existing international trials to Canada, a maximum of **two projects** will be selected to receive **up to \$300,000** in funding.

Early career researchers and applicants from diverse backgrounds and disciplines are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility

To be considered eligible for funding, the proposed study must meet **all** the following criteria.

The proposed trial must:

- Be a pilot randomized trial (RT) designed to evaluate the feasibility of a future larger trial or establish Canadian participation in an international trial.
- Demonstrate a strong scientific rationale and address an important gap in pediatric and/or perinatal health.
- Have the potential to generate data suitable for at least one of the following:
 - Inform the design of a larger trial.
 - Support a subsequent granting agency funding application.
- Include a realistic project timeline, budget, and recruitment plan that can be undertaken within the one-year funding period.

Eligible Trial Categories

Application must fall into **one** of the following categories:

New Canadian Trials

- The proposed study is a new pilot RT that will be conducted in Canada.
- The pilot should primarily evaluate trial feasibility (e.g., recruitment, retention, intervention delivery, protocol adherence, outcome collection) while generating preliminary data to support a future larger-scale trial.

International Trials Expanding into Canada

- The proposed study is an international RT that does not currently include Canadian sites, or pediatric/maternal population in Canada.
- Funding will support one or more Canadian sites.
- Funding use will be in accordance with Tri-Council policies, including potential contribution to the international trial operations.

Applicant Eligibility

The **Primary Applicant** must:

- Be a member of POPCORN (see [membership policy](#))
- Be affiliated with a participating POPCORN site and have the ability to receive funds at this site (<https://www.popcornpediatrics.ca/sites>)
 - Primary applicants not affiliated to a POPCORN site will be eligible if they list a co-principal investigator who fulfills the criteria
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Additional Considerations for Scoring of Applications

- Demonstrate collaboration across POPCORN sites, Include meaningful patient and family engagement in study design and conduct
- Incorporate principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigeneity (EDI-I)
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Funding Details

- Duration: 12 months (March 2027 to March 2028)
- **Funding amount:**
 - up to \$200,000 for new Canadian trials
 - up to \$300,000 for the expansion of international trials to Canada

Note that overhead costs are NOT eligible for this grant. Successful applicants will need to comply with POPCORN's data sharing policy and authorship policy and will be invited to present trial findings at a future POPCORN conference.

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit **one complete application package**. Applications that are incomplete or exceed the page limits will not be reviewed. See [Evaluation Criteria](#) for additional details.

Formatting requirements

- Single-spaced
- 12-point, Times New Roman font
- 2 cm margins
- Submitted as **one PDF document**

Title page

- Principal applicant's name and affiliations
- Co-applicant(s) name and affiliations

Research proposal (max 4 pages + 1-page references)

- Project title
- Brief background and rationale
 - Describe the clinical problem or knowledge gap
 - Summarize the existing evidence supporting the proposed study
 - Explain why a pilot RT is needed
- Objectives
 - Clearly state the primary feasibility objectives(s)
 - Include any secondary or exploratory objects, where appropriate
- Study design and methodology
 - Study design and randomization
 - Study setting
 - Participant eligibility and recruitment
 - Intervention and comparator
 - Outcome measures
 - Data collection procedures

- Statistical analysis plan
 - Sample size justification
- Project timeline
 - Provide a timeline demonstrating completion for the proposed work within the one-year funding period
- Expected outcomes and impact
 - Describe how the pilot will inform future trials
 - Contribute to improvements in pediatric or maternal health
 - Position the team for future granting agency funding
 - Generate data suitable for publication

Budget description (max 1 page)

- Clear description of budget allocation for the funding amount with proposed timelines, and description of any additional funding sources

Alignment with POPCORN (max 1 page)

- How the project relates to POPCORN's purpose and vision
 - Mention any potential or need for involvement of POPCORN cross-cutting pillars or POPCORN resources for the conduct of the project
 - Describe how equity, diversity, inclusion and indigeneity (EDI+I), patient engagement, and knowledge mobilization would be incorporated in the project, as relevant

Letter of support (For international trials ONLY) (max 2 pages)

- For international trials only, a letter from the international sponsor must be provided to indicate support for the trial to be expanded to Canada at the proposed site(s)

NOTE: Additional letters of support or other documentation not included above will NOT be considered in the application.

Deadline

Application Deadline: **December 1st, 2026**

Notification of Results: **January 15th, 2027**

How to Apply

Submit your complete application package to popcorn@micyrn.ca with the subject line: *POPCORN RCT Funding Application – [Your Name]*.

Contact

For questions please contact:

 popcorn@micyrn.ca

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description	Score Range
1. Scientific Merit of Project	Clarity, innovation, originality, and relevance of the research question. Does the project have potential to address a significant gap in pediatric or maternal health outcomes? Is the scientific rationale strong?	0–20
2. Methodological Rigor of Project	Appropriateness and robustness of the proposed methods and analysis plan. Assesses the quality of the study design, randomization strategy, intervention and control, outcome measure, and overall methodological approach. Are the proposed methods appropriate to address the study objectives and pilot feasibility question?	0–25
3. Feasibility of Project	Feasibility of the project within the timeline, budget, and resources. Is the project scope achievable with the resources available? Considerations include recruitment strategy, ethics and regulatory readiness, and project management.	0–15
4. Potential for Future Funding	Does the pilot trial have the potential to strengthen a future grant application allowing the trial to be expanded to additional Canadian sites?	0–10
5. Alignment and Potential for POPCORN	Degree of alignment with POPCORN's Purpose and Vision, namely efforts to make the trial multidisciplinary and/or multicentric. In addition, highlighting its role as a collaborative research initiative through planned collaboration across POPCORN pillars	0–20
6. EDI+I, Patient Engagement, Knowledge Translation	Consideration of equity, diversity, inclusion and indigeneity (EDI+I). Planned involvement of patients and families with lived/living experience. Quality and feasibility of the knowledge mobilization plan.	0–10

Total Score: ____/100