

2026 – BRIGHT Run Funding Application

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Foundation will not accept any hardcopy application packages.

Step 1: Have your proposal approved and signed by Dr. Jonathan Sussman, Chair, Department of Oncology and Dr. Christopher Hillis, VP Oncology, Hamilton Health Sciences.

Submit the complete proposal and budget along with the Signature and Contact Sheet (*Sections A and B*) of the Proposal Application to Dr. Sussman's Office via e-mail:

To the attention of **Wanda Oldfield** at oldfiew@mcmaster.ca
Email Subject Line: **JHCC 2026 Grant Application - PI Surname**
By **Monday, April 27, 2026 at 4:00 pm**

You are not required to send a copy to Dr. Christopher Hillis' Office. They will coordinate with Dr. Sussman's Office and send the complete signed form and proposal back to the appropriate applicant via email by **Friday, May 1, 2026**.

Step 2: Submit your application to The Foundation by **Monday, May 4, 2026**:

Complete the [Online Submission Form](#). You are required to attach the scanned copy of the Signature and Contact Sheet (Section A) and the complete proposal (Section B) as a single PDF file. Separate PDF files will not be accepted. Applications submitted by e-mail will not be accepted.

Important Dates:

April 27, 2026	Due date to submit complete proposal, budget, and the Signature and Contact Information Sheet to Dr. Sussman's Office for review and signature.
May 1, 2026	Dr. Christopher Hillis' Office will e-mail back the complete signed proposal and form back to applicants.
May 4, 2026	Due date for applicants to submit the proposal to The Foundation via the Online Submission Form .
Early July, 2026	Applicants will be notified of the funding decisions.

The call for applications will close on May 4, 2026 at 11:59 pm.
Late submissions will not be accepted.

If you have any questions, please contact **Jeo Mangaya-ay, Donor Services Coordinator**,
at HHSFGrants@hhsc.ca.

OVERVIEW

Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation's (HHSF) main purpose is to champion and advance the vision and mandate of the Juravinski Cancer Program (JCP). Through the generosity of our donors, we fund capital redevelopment projects, purchase medical equipment and technology, and invest in research and professional development of our staff. As part of its commitment to research, the Foundation sponsors a Research Grant Program that awards funding through a rigorous peer reviewed application process annually.

Historically, all applications, including those applying for BRIGHT Run funding, were submitted through one unified form. This year, BRIGHT Run has introduced new terms and conditions that will require a separate application process. This application pertains specifically to **BRIGHT Run funding**.

The BRIGHT Run is a non-competitive, family friendly 1 KM/5KM walk or run which is held annually on the first Saturday after Labour Day. The BRIGHT Run depends on 200+ volunteers (no paid staff) who give of their time and talent year round to make this fundraiser a community success.

The BRIGHT Run exists to support breast cancer research through which advances in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care are made.

More than \$6 million has been raised since the first BRIGHT Run in 2008. Every dollar raised by BRIGHT Run participants supports breast cancer research at Hamilton's Juravinski Cancer Centre and McMaster University. This research has the potential to impact the lives of thousands of breast cancer patients; locally in this region and beyond.

BRIGHT Run funding is important because there is enormous competition for research funds across the country. It can be difficult to attain funding for smaller studies that often form the groundwork for larger projects.

Funded BRIGHT Run research projects can be found at <https://brightrun.ca/category/funded-projects/>.

FUNDING AVAILABLE:

The suggested minimum individual grant amount is \$50,000. The maximum individual grant amount is \$250,000. Projects must be initiated within six months of funding approval, and project grants are to be utilized within three years. Funds will be distributed in equal portions over the term of the grant.

A maximum of two projects can be funded up to the \$250,000 level to any one Principal Investigator at any given time.

CRITERIA:

- 1) Principal Investigators must either be employees or have an appointment in a department at Hamilton Health Sciences and/or McMaster University. A student or resident/fellow can be a co-applicant; but (is) not eligible to be a Principal Investigator.
- 2) Each Principal Investigator may have a maximum of three projects underway, funded through BRIGHT Run, at any given time and each project must engage, at minimum, one junior researcher (within five years of their McMaster appointment)/co-investigator. Applicants are advised to include a statistician and/or research-trained methodologist on the team, as well as at least one patient or survivor.

- 3) The principal investigator must be involved in the Cancer Program at the Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre. For example, members of the department of Oncology at JHCC, a Disease Site Team, and/or the Escarpment Cancer Research Institute would all be eligible.
- 4) The project must involve research with clearly identified research questions or objectives and methodologies. Quality improvement projects are not eligible.

APPLICATION PACKAGE:

A complete application package must include all of the following, and be submitted as a single PDF:

- 1) A lay abstract.
- 2) A scientific abstract.
- 3) A research proposal which includes all components listed in Section B: Proposal Information.
- 4) Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for each investigator.
- 5) A list of all prior HHSF funded grants as PI or Co-PI.
- 6) A list of all other active grants.
- 7) A completed Researcher Contact and Signature Sheet (Section A), with signatures from the Chair of the Department of Oncology and Head of Cancer Research, HHS.

See pages 6-9 for further details on these components.

Strategies for Developing a Fundable Grant

- The following criteria will guide funding decisions: multidisciplinary collaboration, mentorship and team development, innovation and local impact, commitment to equity and inclusion, and knowledge translation, i.e. clinical trials, basic science and health services.
- Funding is available to projects that bring together diverse perspectives from clinical, scientific, psychosocial, and/or community health disciplines and all disciplines conducting research directly related to breast cancer i.e. engineering, genetics, psychosocial support, physical rehabilitation, medical/radiation/surgical oncology, imaging.
- Applications should demonstrate alignment with the BRIGHT Run's commitment to advancing breast cancer research that improves prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care.
- Applications that consider diverse patient populations, such as younger patients or underrepresented groups, are encouraged.
- Applications that foster mentorship – particularly those involving teams of early-career and senior investigators working together – will be prioritized.
- Preference will be given to projects or research questions that have the potential to fill knowledge gaps, lay the groundwork for future larger studies, or translate directly into improved patient care as it relates to breast cancer.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact the Co-chairs of the Grant Review Panel if they have questions about the eligibility of their research proposal. The Co-chairs can be reached by contacting Jeo Mangaya-ay, Donor Services Coordinator, at [**HHSFGrants@hhsc.ca**](mailto:HHSFGrants@hhsc.ca)

JCP Research Priorities:

Preference will be given to projects demonstrating compatibility with JCP priorities in one or more of the following areas:

1) Fosters Research Development:

- Tackles novel research questions that may be difficult to fund through traditional routes.
- Increases the likelihood of successful external funding in the future through pilot projects or the collection of baseline data necessary to further develop research methods or proposals.
- Supports novice and early career investigators in developing their research programs and expertise.

2) Promotes research excellence:

- Provides research training and mentorship opportunities (i.e., senior researchers on the team have a formal role for providing expertise, supervision and/or support to early career researchers or graduate students as co-principal investigators or co-investigators).

REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA:

Eligible applications for BRIGHT Run grants go through a rigorous peer review process conducted by the Grants and Distribution Committee, made up of academic and medical professionals from McMaster University and Juravinski Cancer Centre, as well as one lay reviewer. There are also two statisticians on the committee as well as two ad hoc members who specialize in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Committee co-chairs will approach a “field expert” for specialized knowledge if needed. The committee must include at least one community/patient representative with “lived” breast cancer experience.

Proposals are reviewed based on the following criteria:

1) Scientific Merit (score out of 4.9)

- Appropriateness of the research plan, including its feasibility and the use of the best available methodology.
- The significance of the work proposed and its originality, potential for innovation or novelty of the concepts, ideas or hypotheses being pursued in the application.
- Concise scientific and lay abstracts that provide a clear summary of the purpose, methods and importance of proposed research in language appropriate for the intended audience.
- Projects with a scientific merit score less than 3.5 are not eligible for funding.

2) Likelihood of Completion

- The suitability of the research team and other resources including the availability of facilities and time required to complete the work proposed within the specified time period (i.e., 15 or 36 months for Research Development and Thematic grants, respectively).
- The feasibility of study implementation in relation to institutional support, recruitment and data collection methods, and ethical issues.

3) Fit with the BRIGHT Run and JCP Priorities (score out of 4.9)

- The degree of fit with BRIGHT Run and JCP research priorities (see pages 3- 4) and the potential impact or importance of the work proposed for the JCP and for breast cancer control.

4) Appropriateness of the Budget

- The budget is well justified and budget items are eligible, appropriate and sufficient to support the completion of the research plan.

BRIGHT RUN FUNDING CONDITIONS:

- 1) The principal investigator and co-principal investigator are required to abide by The Foundation's "Terms of Funding Agreement" (see sample on page 10), which is provided upon confirmation of funding. BRIGHT Run will be acknowledged as the project funder in all communications.
- 2) Principal Investigators must provide results and impacts/outcomes supported by relevant data to Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation (HHSF) annually following standard reporting guidelines and funding conditions.
- 3) A no-cost extension of 12 months will be considered on an exception basis, i.e. in the case of health, personal or family circumstances such as maternity/paternity leave. Requests should be brought to the attention of the Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation for presentation to the Grants and Distribution Committee.
- 4) The BRIGHT Run promotes funded projects on its website, eNewsletter and in other marketing materials; at the BRIGHT Run event in September, and at Juravinski Cancer Centre/McMaster University events.
- 5) Funded Principal Investigators and their co-investigators will be asked to provide their CV and headshot for placement on the BRIGHT Run website.
- 6) Principal Investigators should plan to disseminate results to both academic and community audiences through the marketing/public relations opportunities provided above; and by attending the BRIGHT Run in September where they can engage and informally share their research with participants and patients.

CHANGES TO THIS FUNDING POLICY

The BRIGHT Run Executive will review this Policy annually and amend as needed. The most current version of this Policy may be found on the BRIGHT Run's website at <https://brightrun.ca/funded-projects>. For more information, please contact the BRIGHT Run Event chair at info@brightrun.ca.

SECTION A: RESEARCHER CONTACT AND SIGNATURE SHEET

Project Title

Principal Investigator Name, Academic Title (if appropriate)

Principal Investigator Signature

Supervisor Name

Supervisor Signature
(if submitted by a graduate student or Fellow)

Principal Investigator Email Address

Principal Investigator Location & Full Mailing Address

Telephone

Extension

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**Co-Principal Investigator Name, Academic Title
(if applicable)**

Co-Principal Investigator Signature (if applicable)

Supervisor Name (if applicable)

Supervisor Signature (if applicable)

Co-Principal Investigator Location & Full Mailing Address

Telephone

Extension

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Email:

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Signature of Dr. Jonathan Sussman
Chair, Department of Oncology

Date

Signature of Dr. Christopher Hillis
Vice President, Oncology
Hamilton Health Sciences

Date

Co-Investigators:

_____ Name	_____ Degree
_____ Academic Title (if appropriate)	_____ Oncology Program Area
_____ Address	_____ Signature of Co-investigator
_____ Name	_____ Degree
_____ Academic Title (if appropriate)	_____ Oncology Program Area
_____ Address	_____ Signature of Co-investigator

Co-Investigators continued:

_____ Name	_____ Degree
_____ Academic Title (if appropriate)	_____ Oncology Program Area
_____ Address	_____ Signature of Co-Investigator
_____ Name	_____ Degree
_____ Academic Title (if appropriate)	_____ Oncology Program Area
_____ Address	_____ Signature of Co-Investigator

SECTION B: PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Lay Abstract: Please note that the lay abstract is an important element of the proposal and is evaluated in the review process. It **must** be written in language suitable for lay audiences and reviewers (grade 8 to 12 reading level) in a maximum of 250 words that summarize the research project.

Scientific Abstract: Structured format (introduction, purpose/aim, methods, results, significance or impact) in a maximum of 250 words to summarize research proposal

Research Proposal: maximum of 6 single spaced pages, excluding the lay and scientific abstract, timeline, references, appendices and names of external reviewers. The proposal format must include ***1-inch margins and use size 11, Times New Roman font, single spaced.***

The proposal must include and be formatted with the use of headings for the following content areas:

1. Objectives
2. Background
3. Rationale
4. A clear description of the study methods including the following:
 - Study design
 - Setting, sample and sample size
 - Procedures for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis
 - Ethical issues
5. Significance
 - What new information will study findings contribute to the current state of evidence?
 - Overall relevance, importance and potential for improving breast cancer treatment, the delivery of cancer services and/or patient and health system outcomes
 - Clear, achievable scope suitable for the BRIGHT Run's funding range and demonstrate thoughtful use of funds
6. Budget Detail and Justification*
 - Complete an itemized budget that provides rationale for **why these expenses are necessary to conduct the proposed research** (i.e., attach quotes/estimates for personnel, services, equipment, supplies, communication, travel etc.)
 - ***Eligible budget items** are those costs associated *conducting the proposed research* including study setup, data collection, and data analysis. Examples include expenses related to: salary for research staff, assays, lab equipment, office supplies, postage, printing, computer equipment, software programs for data analysis and telephone. Travel costs for research team meetings or participant recruitment are eligible. *A maximum of \$2,000* can be allocated for research trainee (resident, graduate student, fellow) travel to conferences, but only if they have a peer reviewed abstract accepted for an oral or poster presentation. Confirmation of abstract acceptance is required for the release of funds.
 - ***Ineligible budget items include:** 1) additional expenses associated with operating costs to deliver health care services or interventions that are either the focus of investigation or are not part of routine practice (e.g., supplies, equipment, diagnostic tests, and clinical staff or other non-research staff personnel), 2) publication costs (e.g., open access journals), and 3) researcher (non-trainee) conference travel.
7. Description of the Research Team
 - Brief summary describing their role and the expertise and time commitment each member of the research team will provide to ensure the successful completion of this study.
 - Demonstrate how this study will support research training and mentorship of novice/early career researchers.
8. Timeline and Feasibility
 - A summary outlining project activities, major milestones and time to study completion.
 - Discuss feasibility issues (e.g., institutional, methodological) and how they will be addressed.

- For studies requiring data collection within practice settings, provide evidence of organizational/institutional agreement and support to conduct the study.
9. References (not included in 6-page limit)
 10. External Reviewers
 - Identify 2 potential external reviewers. IMPORTANT: Please outline their current position, area of expertise, email address, telephone number and postal address. Full contact information is required.
 - Eligible reviewers include those who are:
 - external to the Juravinski Cancer Program and McMaster University;
 - content and/or methodological experts in fields relevant to the proposed research; and
 - do not have an actual or potential conflict of interest due to a current or previous working, family, or social relationship with the principal and/or co-principal applicants (includes previous supervisors, colleagues or research team members within the last 3 years)
 11. If this is a resubmission, provide a letter outlining how the proposal has been revised to address the feedback from previous reviewers.
 12. Appendices
 - *A maximum of 5 pages* of appendices may be attached at the discretion of the applicant. Appendices should be limited to tables, diagrams or documents that complement and support but do not replace information required in the text of the proposal.

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae: (maximum 3 pages plus publications from last 3 years per investigator)

Previous Funding:

- List all prior HHSF funded grants as Principal or Co-Principal Investigator, including date of funding, title and amount.
- Indicate all other active grants including amounts received, grants currently pending review including amounts requested, and percent of overlap with current proposal.

SAMPLE - TERMS OF FUNDING - NOT TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

JHCC Foundation Grants & Distribution Terms of Funding – Sample Agreement

In order to receive funding, please note the following:

1. Sign this document and return to the Foundation, at which time the Foundation will advise the JCC Finance office to activate an account in your name, specifically for this grant.
2. The Foundation will transfer the first of four installments of your grant (25%) to JCC Finance.
3. The Foundation will transfer the second of four installments (25%) in the next quarter to JCC Finance.
4. **INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT** is due to the Foundation.
5. After the Foundation receives, in writing, an **INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT** including:

- Milestones reached
- How the funds have been used to date
- Anticipated delays and how they are being managed
- Expected date of completion

the Foundation will transfer the third and fourth (final) installments (25% each) in the third and fourth quarters to JCC Finance.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

FAILURE TO SUBMIT AN **INTERIM PROJECT REPORT** WILL RESULT IN DELAY OR
REFUSAL OF YOUR FINAL INSTALLMENTS.

6. A final report must be submitted to the Foundation Office within 6 months of the completion of the research project including:
 - A breakdown of how the funds were used (final financial report)
 - A summary of publications referencing the research project
 - Scientific and lay abstracts of research outcomes

Important Note: Failure to submit a final report will affect future grant application consideration by the Foundation.

7. Funds not accessed within 12 months will be returned to the Foundation by JCC Finance and recipient must re-apply for funding approval.
8. These funds are encumbered for this specific project and any funds, which are not used, must be reimbursed back to the Foundation Office.
9. Any publications resulting from this project must acknowledge the support of the Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre Foundation.

Expected Start Date - (mm/dd/yy)

Expected Date of Completion - (mm/dd/yy)

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Signature of Co-Principal Investigator
(if applicable)

Date (mm/dd/yy)

Signature of Vice-President, Development
JHCC Foundation

Date (mm/dd/yy)