



**THE HOSPITAL RESEARCH
FOUNDATION GROUP
NORTHERN ADELAIDE LOCAL
HEALTH NETWORK**

PROJECT GRANT ROUND 2026

Guidelines V 1.0

Applications Open: 12 January 2026

Applications Close: 18 March 2026

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ABOUT THE HOSPITAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION GROUP

The Hospital Research Foundation (THRF) Group exists to improve the health and wellbeing of our community. Our purpose is simple:

“Together, fight for better health and wellbeing for our community through life-changing medical research and improved healthcare.”

THRF Group is a profit-for-purpose organisation which raises funds through community donations, corporate support and proceeds from The Hospital Research Foundation Home Lottery program. These proceeds enable us to fund and facilitate medical research and patient care services across more than 60 areas of disease and illness, from birth to end of life.

THRF Group consists of 11 charities which work together to maximise health and wellbeing, and allow supporters to choose an area of healthcare that matters most to them. Through our Group structure, we are committed to delivering a progressive research and grants program that is sustainable, promotes collaboration and delivers impact for the community.

THRF Group has generously committed funding to the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network for this grant round.

ABOUT THE ROUND

The 2026 Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN) project grant round seeks to support and advance research primarily based at NALHN, conducted by research-active clinicians and health professionals/practitioners who are staff members of NALHN.

The project grant is offered via a competitive application-based process, with available funding up to a maximum of \$100,000 for one year. Only one grant will be awarded.

NALHN seeks innovative proposals that:

- advance health outcomes in line with strategic plan of [NALHN Research Strategy 2021-2024](#)
- have potential for translation of research outcomes into healthcare practice.
- have transdisciplinary teams and collaboration.

The inclusion of early career researchers/research-active clinicians in project teams is also encouraged.

REQUIREMENTS

Administering Institution

Projects may propose to be administered by either of the following Administering Institutions:

- Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN)
- Adelaide University

Please note: Because the Administering Institution (AI) is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the general facilities and supporting resources necessary for the project’s conduct are available, all applications proposed to be administered by Adelaide University must **also** be endorsed by NALHN (see Certification section of these Guidelines).

If an application is approved for funding, THRF Group will enter into a funding agreement with the nominated AI detailing appropriate management and administration requirements for the approved project.

Investigator Eligibility Requirements

The first-named investigator on an application – Chief Investigator A (CIA) – will be considered the Project Leader, who has the primary responsibility to run and report and appropriately manage finances on the project (if

approved). The CIA must be a salaried staff member of NALHN – enabling NALHN to commit and manage the CIA’s time contribution to the project. A CIA with more than one formal appointment can only nominate one of the above to be the Administering Institution (AI) for the purposes of this round.

For this round:

- An applicant can only submit one (1) application as CIA.
- Up to three (3) additional Chief Investigators (i.e. CIB – CID) may be included on each application.
- CIs can be involved in no more than two (2) applications (including involvement as CIA).

NALHN, in consultation with THRF Group, reserves the right to exclude from further consideration any applications contravening these limits.

All CIs must:

- be able to demonstrate professional career experience relevant to the field of this round.
- provide a meaningful contribution and time commitment to the proposed project over its full duration.
- not be a currently enrolled HDR candidate.

Contributors playing a minor role in the project and/or with an intermittent/low time commitment should be indicated as Collaborators/Associate Investigators. Currently enrolled HDR candidates contributing to the project should also be similarly listed. Associate Investigators will not be counted when considering application limits.

Researchers (i) located outside South Australia, and/or (ii) whose only appointment is by a non-salaried honorary, visiting or affiliate appointment, cannot be CIA, but may be listed as an additional Chief Investigator (CIB – CID) or included as a member of the broader project team.

Incomplete, False or Misleading Information

All information submitted (full applications and reports) must be complete, current and accurate at the time of submission, and free of false or misleading information.

Examples of false or misleading information include, but are not limited to, providing:

- dishonest statements regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought.
- incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding.
- inaccurate claims in publication records; or
- incomplete or misleading information of ethics and governance requirements or other factors that may impact the researcher’s ability to commence the research program in a timely manner.

If NALHN/THRF Group believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information were intentional, it may choose to exclude an application from assessment, withdraw funding, and/or refer the matter to the AI.

Terms and Conditions for Funding

If a project is selected for funding, THRF Group and the Administering Institution will enter into a formal funding agreement detailing funding terms and conditions. Unless otherwise agreed, the project must commence within six (6) months of receiving notification of the award, but not before the funding agreement is fully executed. The Administering Institution will be responsible for ensuring all relevant ethics approvals and collaborative agreements are in place.

The funding agreement between THRF Group and the nominated Administering Institution will include provisions that Chief Investigators must:

- provide regular reports on the progress of the research through SmartyGrants as requested. Progress will be monitored against agreed milestones, and evidence of outputs and outcomes will be required;
- report any unexpected delays or changes to the research plan to THRF Group via NALHN’s Research Office in a timely manner;
- acknowledge THRF Group funding support in all presentations of the work;
- provide updates upon request to THRF Group Communications and Marketing teams;

- participate in media opportunities coordinated by THRF Group where necessary, including local radio and local and national media announcements. Relevant media advice and preparation will be available via THRF Group's Communications team;
- seek in advance THRF Group's approval regarding the content, timing and release of public announcements, media releases, and/or online information relating to the project;
- assist in future grant reviews if requested by THRF Group (where reasonably practicable); &
- (if a first-time awardee of THRF Group funding and where reasonably practicable) attend one of THRF Group's regular induction meetings within the first year of funding.

FUNDING

Funding Amount

The maximum funding that can be requested is up to \$100,000 (total) over one year. Funding can be used to support salaries and direct research costs.

The funding cannot be used to support organisational indirect costs, infrastructure levies, travel for conferences and study tours, or journal publication costs. Further exclusions are indicated below.

A detailed budget will be required.

NALHN Strategic Research Council, in consultation with THRF Group, reserves the right to vary the available funding in this round.

Salary Support

Salary support may be requested for CIs and/or other personnel needed for the project. The need for any such salary support must be well-justified. For the avoidance of doubt, salary support may be requested for Collaborators/Associate Investigators, but such requests must be very well-justified.

Salary support requests should include the base salary and statutory on-costs, such as leave accruals and the superannuation guarantee contribution. Such on-costs are limited to a maximum 30% of the base salary request. Applicants must verify the relevant base salary scales and rate of on-costs before finalising budgets in the application form. Project staff are to be appointed at standard award conditions, commensurate with experience, as determined by the Administering Institution.

Due to the limited term of project funding, stipends for Higher Degree by Research students should not be included in proposal budget requests.

Direct Research Costs

Direct research costs pertain to costs directly related to the conduct of the project and may include research reagents, consumables, consumer engagement, services, software, minor equipment, and travel for the purposes of conducting the research program. Purchase of major equipment (>\$10,000-unit cost) is not an eligible direct research cost for the purposes of this grant round. For clarity, conference attendance, publication, open access fees, patenting and/or IP protection costs are not considered direct research costs and should not be included in proposal budget requests.

APPLICATION STAGES & ASSESSMENT

STAGE 1: Full Application

Applicants will submit a full application in the specified format through the THRF Group's SmartyGrants platform. Full applications must provide detail on scientific merit, feasibility and budget considerations, and on how project outcomes can deliver beneficial impacts. NALHN expects applicants to provide all necessary information to make evaluation possible on the SmartyGrants full application form but reserves the right to request additional information if needed.

Certification

NALHN: Endorsement from an authorised delegate of NALHN (on the [required template](#)) is required for all applications, and must be uploaded with the application in SmartyGrants for it to be considered complete at time of submission.

Adelaide University: If it is proposed that the project will be administered by Adelaide University rather than directly by NALHN, then endorsement from an authorised delegate of the University must **also** be uploaded with the application in SmartyGrants using the [required template](#) for it to be considered complete at time of submission.

Sign off from an authorised delegate can be obtained by contacting the Research Office at the relevant organisation – further instruction is provided in the SmartyGrants form. It is the CIA’s responsibility to ensure that the application is fully certified in the specified format as part of the submission (refer Appendix B for details). No exemption or extension for the purposes of obtaining this certification will be given.

Assessment

Eligible full applications will be reviewed against the relevant assessment criteria (see Appendix A). In the case that none of the submissions are deemed worthy of funding, NALHN Strategic Research Council (SRC) grants sub-committee may, in consultation with THRF Group, close the round without awarding funding. If NALHN SRC grants sub-committee reasonably considers any applications to be similar or complementary to other applications received, NALHN SRC sub-committee may request that the applicants consider some or greater cooperation between the researchers (where appropriate). There is no obligation imposed on applicants under this condition. Any cooperation that might arise from such a suggestion by NALHN SRC grants sub-committee would be voluntary.

Lay language components of the invited submissions may be used to engage consumers in aspects of the decision-making process.

STAGE 2: Funding Decision

The final funding recommendations, informed by assessor reviews, will be made by NALHN SRC grants sub-committee, for endorsement and approval by the NALHN SRC and THRF Group. This decision will be final, and no further negotiations will be entered into.

If an application is approved for funding, THRF Group will enter into a funding agreement with the nominated Administering Institution.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be completed and submitted online through THRF Group’s SmartyGrants platform by the due date and time. Please note:

- **Only electronic submission through the SmartyGrants system will be accepted.**
- **Applicants must click on the “Submit” button when the application is finalised.**
- **Applicants will then receive a confirmation of application submission by email.**
- **If the email is not received (after checking junk/spam folders), applicants should assume that the submission has not occurred and re-attempt submission.**

Please also note:

- Due to incompatibility issues, **do not use Internet Explorer** with SmartyGrants.
- The SmartyGrants PDF download/preview may not reflect all required questions within the application form as some sections may be conditional. We strongly recommend working through the online form within the SmartyGrants system well before the deadline to ensure you understand all of the information that will be required to complete the submission.

APPLY AT:

<https://hospitalresearch.smartygrants.com.au/2026-NALHN-project>

Applications close at 4:00 PM (ACDT) on Wednesday 18th March 2026
All queries should be directed to health.nalhngrantsofficer@sa.gov.au
Incomplete, late or incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered.

- Unless otherwise specified in the application form, all uploaded files should be provided in PDF format. File names should include a short description of the item followed by the CIA's family name, for example "Transcript_Smith.pdf".
- Links to download the correct version of the biosketch and AI endorsement templates are provided within the SmartyGrants form.
- Unless otherwise requested by THRF Group, information additional to that requested in the application form will not be considered for assessment.

ROUND TIMETABLE

Stage 1: Applications Open	Monday 12 th January 2026 at 12:00 noon (ACDT)
Stage 1: Applications Close	Wednesday 18 th March 2026 at 4:00 PM (ACDT)
Stage 2: Final Outcomes	Indicatively 4-6 weeks after closing date

APPENDIX A- ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Unmet Need (20%)

<i>The proposal addresses an unmet need that is, particularly in the NALHN context, an issue of:</i>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Critically important</p> <p>The proposal compellingly articulates the urgency/criticality of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its significance to consumers; • its alignment with the round objectives; & • describes how if addressed and resolved, it would be extremely significant in improving clinical care and health outcomes.
4	Next 10%	<p>Highly important</p> <p>The proposal provides a very strong case for the importance of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its strong relevance to consumers; • its alignment with the round objectives; & • describes how if addressed and resolved, it would significantly improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
3	Next 15%	<p>Important</p> <p>The proposal provides a good case for the importance of the unmet need and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its relevance to consumers; • its alignment with the round objectives; & • describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
2	Next 20%	<p>Somewhat important</p> <p>The proposal provides some justification for an unmet need in the field and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its relevance to consumers; • its alignment with the round objectives; & • describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would somewhat improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

Approach, Innovation, and Feasibility (30%)

<i>The project's approach to addressing the defined area of unmet need, relative to the field, is:</i>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convincingly addresses the defined unmet need; • is highly innovative, bringing together ideas, methodologies and technologies in ground-breaking new ways; • is extremely cost-effective and of high value for money; & • will almost certainly achieve its stated aims.
4	Next 10%	<p>Very good</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly addresses the defined unmet need; • displays very good methodological and/or technological innovation; • shows high cost-effectiveness or value for money; & • is highly likely to achieve its stated aims.

3	Next 15%	<p>Good</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses the defined unmet need; • displays sound methodological and/or technological innovation; • shows good cost-effectiveness or value for money; & • is more likely than not to achieve most stated aims.
2	Next 20%	<p>Reasonable</p> <p>The project's approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses the defined unmet need to some degree; • displays elements of innovation; • is reasonably cost-effective; & • should achieve some stated aims.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

Impact (20%)

<i>The case for the project's ability to advance the field and deliver its stated outcomes, and the credibility of its pathway for translation to positive patient/healthcare impacts, particularly for NALHN are:</i>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	<p>Outstanding</p> <p>The project will almost certainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strongly advance the field (<i>e.g.</i> extremely substantial shift in the current paradigm or highly significant breakthrough); • deliver outstanding, critically relevant outcomes; & • the project has a highly credible and clearly articulated future translation pathway to sustainably deliver strongly positive patient/healthcare impacts.
4	Next 10%	<p>Very compelling</p> <p>The project is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • markedly advance the field (<i>e.g.</i> substantial shift in the current paradigm or significant breakthrough); • deliver excellent, strongly relevant outcomes; & • the project has a well-described future translation pathway to sustainably deliver positive patient/healthcare impacts.
3	Next 15%	<p>Compelling</p> <p>The project has good potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measurably advance the field (<i>e.g.</i> move the current paradigm or deliver an important breakthrough); • deliver good, relevant outcomes; & • the project has outlined future translation steps which could lead to positive, longer-term patient/healthcare impacts.
2	Next 20%	<p>Moderately compelling</p> <p>The project has some potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add to the field (<i>e.g.</i> expand the current paradigm or add important new knowledge); • deliver outcomes of some value and relevance; & • the project has identified some of the steps to take towards positive patient/healthcare impacts beyond the funding period.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

Community and Consumer Engagement (20%)

<i>The team's approach to community and consumer engagement is:</i>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	Outstanding with exemplary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer input and/or co-design of the proposal; • meaningful and effective consumer engagement across all project elements.
4	Next 10%	Very Good with very good: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer input and/or co-design of the proposal; • consumer engagement in key project elements.
3	Next 15%	Good with good: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer input to the proposal; • consumer engagement in project elements.
2	Next 20%	Reasonable with reasonable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer input to the proposal; • consumer engagement in some project elements.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

Capacity, Capability and Resources to Deliver the Project (10%)

<i>Relative to opportunity, the demonstrated quality and relevance of the skills, experience and capability of the CIA and team to deliver the project is:</i>		
Category	Band	Descriptor
5	Top 5%	Outstanding Relative to opportunity, CIA and team demonstrate outstanding, highly relevant track records with excellent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to know-how and technologies; • balance of expertise and experience; & • interdisciplinary representation.
4	Next 10%	Very good Relative to opportunity, CIA and team demonstrate strong, relevant track records with very good: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to know-how and technologies; • balance of expertise and experience; & • interdisciplinary representation.
3	Next 15%	Good Relative to opportunity, CIA and team demonstrate solid track records, with good: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to know-how and technologies; • balance of expertise and experience; & • interdisciplinary representation.
2	Next 20%	Reasonable Relative to opportunity, CIA and team demonstrate relevant track records, with reasonable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to know-how and technologies; • balance of expertise and experience; & • interdisciplinary representation.
1	Bottom 50%	Not competitive

OFFICIAL

APPENDIX B- INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT DETAILS

Stage 1: Full Application Endorsement

At Full Application stage, the prescribed form (to be provided) will require sign-off by the CEO/DVCR of the Administering Institution (or their authorised delegate), to certify and confirm the following:

- They have read, understood and complied with the relevant Grant Guidelines (the grant guidelines) and, to the best of their knowledge, all details provided in this application form and in any supporting documentation are true and complete in accordance with the grant guidelines.
- Proper enquiries have been made and they are satisfied that the participants and organisations listed in this application meet the requirements specified in the grant guidelines.
- The listed participants are responsible for the authorship and intellectual content of this application, and have appropriately cited sources and acknowledged significant contributions to this application.
- To the best of their knowledge, all personnel contributing to the project activity have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* and other relevant policies concerning the conduct of research, and have agreed to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- To the best of their knowledge, all material personal and financial interests and Conflicts of Interest relating to parties involved in or associated with this application have been disclosed to the Administering Institution, and, if the application is successful, they agree to manage all Conflicts of Interest relating to this application in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and any relevant successor documents.
- They have obtained sufficient written agreement of all the relevant persons and organisations necessary for this application to be submitted. This written evidence has been retained and will be provided to THRF Group if requested.
- They consent, on behalf of all the parties, to this application being referred to third parties for confidential assessment purposes.
- They consent, on behalf of all the parties, to THRF Group copying, modifying and otherwise dealing with information contained in this application for the purpose of conducting the funding round.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, and they acknowledge that if found to be in breach of any requirements the application may be excluded from consideration by THRF Group.
- If this application is successful:
 - The project can be carried out as set out in this application and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant guidelines and the relevant funding agreement.
 - The project can be accommodated within the general facilities of this Institution and if applicable, within the facilities of other relevant organisations specified in this application, and sufficient working and office space is available for project personnel.
 - This Institution and relevant participating organisations will make the financial and/or in-kind contributions to the project as set out in this application.
 - Access to privileged data or resources, such as patient data or patient samples, or workspaces, such as clinics, can be accommodated by this Institution or by other relevant organisation specified in this application.
 - Approval of the project activity by relevant institutional committees or approval bodies (such as for ethics and biosafety) will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the project, or the parts of the project that require such approval.
 - Arrangements for the management of the project will be agreed in writing between all participating organisations associated with the application before the project can commence.
 - In carrying out the project, the Administering Institution will comply, and require any other participating organisations to comply, with the provisions of any applicable laws, regulations, by-laws and requirements of any applicable Commonwealth, State, Territory or local authority.



GRANT APPLICATION SUPPORT

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If you have any questions regarding this grant round, please contact the NALHN Research Grants Office at health.nalhngrantsofficer@sa.gov.au

For more information

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sahealth.sa.gov.au/nalhn



Government
of South Australia

Health
Northern Adelaide
Local Health Network

