ACH4 FUNDING APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research

2026

www.ach4.org.au

Grant Program Details	
Opening date	9/10/2026
Closing date and time	13/11/2026 5:00 PM AEDT
Application outcome date	8/12/2026
Grant value	Grants available up to $50,000
Enquiries	**Contact:** Joanne Reidy **Email:** Joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au **Phone:** +612 9843 9175 **Website:** https://ach4.org.au/

ACH4 FUNDING APPLICATION GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW OF GRANT PROGRAM
CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)

Over the past 23 years, ACH4 has supported translational research in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and more recently, human T-lymphotropic virus type-1 (HTLV-1). In 2027, ACH4 will continue to support translational research into these four viral infections.

ACH4 is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) in applied research from qualified scientists to fund research projects focused on: i) development of vaccine candidates for HIV, HBV subtypes, HCV or HTLV-1; ii) development of prevention strategies, including HIV microbicides and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP); iii) cure and treatment interventions for HIV, HBV, or HTLV-1, including immunotherapy iv) novel diagnostics and prognostics for HIV, HBV, HCV, HTLV-1 or hepatitis B/C/HIV/HTLV-1 co-infection; v) molecular tools for tracking epidemics caused by these viruses; and vi) development of new tests for supporting vaccine and antiviral trials for these four viruses . **Basic research is not eligible for funding**, nor are projects focused on developing new direct-acting antivirals for HCV.

Research projects based on clinical data and specimens from patients with HIV, HCV and HBV stored by the Immunovirology Research Network (IVRN) are encouraged.

The grants are intended to complement and translate basic research projects in the virology and immunology of HIV, HBV, HCV and HTLV-1 that are commonly funded by other granting bodies such as NHMRC. **The ACH4 grants are <u>not</u> intended for the basic research itself.** A few awards will be available for seed funding of applications that are viewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to be exciting & innovative ideas that have the potential for longer-term translation.

Funding is available from 1 January 2027 to 30 October 2027 for grants up to $50,000.

Eligibility: Applications are invited from Australian investigators (citizens or permanent residents), whether employed at an Australian university, hospital, research institute or other similar institution conducting research in Australia. Investigators who are currently designated as Chief Investigator A (CI-A) on another grant application funded through the Australian Government Department of Health G05055 Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Research Program are not eligible to apply in this capacity.

To ensure broad participation and equitable access to funding opportunities, each eligible CI-A may submit only one application under this funding round. Collaborative approaches are strongly encouraged and applications from national multidisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborative groups are particularly welcomed.

Applications must be submitted by the Administering Institute or University Research Officer via the ACH4 online application portal: https://ach4.org.au/apply/ if you have any issues with the portal please contact: joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au. ACH4 grants will be awarded to the administering organisation through which the CI-A submits their application. All awards will be governed by a participant agreement (between the participant organisation and The Westmead Institute for Medical Research representing ACH4).
All administering organisations awarded a grant will be required to enter such an agreement.

Guidelines explaining further details & eligibility criteria of this funding is available at ach4.org.au/apply/ or: Joanne Reidy - Administration Officer, ACH4 - The Westmead Institute for Medical Research
PO Box 412, Westmead NSW 2145 Phone: +61 2 9843 9175 / Email: joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au
Expressions of Interest close at 5:00 pm AEDT on Friday 13 November 2026
Areas of Research: HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HTLV-1

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA DECLARATION FOR CHIEF INVESTIGATOR – A (CI-A)

Applications are invited from Australian investigators (citizens or permanent residents), whether employed at an Australian university, hospital, research institute or other similar institution conducting research in Australia.

Investigators who are currently designated as Chief Investigator A (CI-A) on another grant application funded through the Australian Government Department of Health G05055 Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Research Program are not eligible to apply in this capacity.

To ensure broad participation and equitable access to funding opportunities, each eligible CI-A may submit only one application under this funding round.

Collaborative approaches are strongly encouraged and applications from national multidisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborative groups are particularly welcomed.

Note. In the event that the CI-A departs from the Institute, the project will remain with the awardee and will consequently move with the CI-A.

Declaration by Head of Employing (or Administering) Organisation

(to be completed on page 5 of application template)

To ensure clarity and consistency in determining eligibility and classification, the following guidelines apply:

Eligibility Criterion	Status	Details
PhD Students	**Ineligible**	Individuals currently enrolled in a PhD program are not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity but may be named as co-CIs where the PhD student is critical for the successful completion of the proposed research.
Postdoctoral Researchers in Training	**Ineligible**	Postdoctoral researchers who are within 3 years of having completed their PhD# are considered, for the purposes of these awards, to be in a training position and are not eligible to apply as CI-A.
Multiple Applications from the Same Laboratory Group	**Restricted**	To ensure equitable access to funding across research groups: Only one successful grant may be awarded per laboratory group, as defined by the group laboratory leader (whether CI-A or otherwise). Where multiple applications are submitted from the same laboratory group, only one application may be awarded, if ranked highly enough, to receive funding*.

Date when PhD was passed.

*This also applies to researchers (>3 years postdoctoral) who have submitted applications as CI-A and are leading their own area of research within a larger Laboratory group. Independent group leaders within a laboratory group who wish to be considered for separate and non-overlapping projects should supply evidence of their formal recognition of their independent status from their Head of Department or Institute. Where separate applications are submitted by co-lab heads as CI-A, they may be considered as being submitted from separate laboratories if the translational goal of the grant application is distinct i.e. vaccines, vs diagnostic, vs antivirals etc.

AREAS OF RESEARCH

The areas of research of highest priority for support in 2027 are listed below.

Collaboration with national strategic funded bodies for HIV, hepatitis and HTLV-1 research are strongly encouraged

HIV Research and Development Area	Description
Vaccine Development	Development of vaccine candidates up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development.
Vaccine Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials.
HIV Prevention Strategies	Development of preventatives such as microbicides, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) regimens.
Prevention Monitoring Assays	Development of assay systems to monitor the effectiveness of microbicides, PrEP, and PEP regimens.
Cure Intervention Development	Development of cure interventions up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development.
Antiviral Drug Development	Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy.
Drug Resistance and Toxicity Testing	Development of tests for antiviral drug resistance and toxicity.
Cure Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure appropriate immunological and virological outcomes in clinical trials of cure interventions.
Diagnostics and Prognostics	Development of diagnostics and prognostics for the antiretroviral therapy (ART) era, including point-of-care tests.
Molecular Virology Tools	Development of molecular virology tools for tracking the HIV epidemic.

HCV Research and Development Area	Description
Vaccine Development	Development of vaccine candidates up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development.
Vaccine Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials.

HCV Research and Development Area	Description
Preventative Development	Development of preventatives such as disinfectants for cleansing of injecting apparatus.
Prevention Monitoring Assays	Development of assay systems to monitor the effectiveness of disinfectants for cleansing of injecting apparatus.
Diagnostics and Prognostics	Development of diagnostics and prognostics for the direct-acting antiviral (DAA) era, including point-of-care tests and drug resistance tests.
Molecular Virology Tools	Development of molecular virology tools for tracking the HCV epidemic.

HBV Research and Development Area	Description
Novel Vaccine Development	Development of novel vaccine candidates for therapeutic use or for non-responders to the existing vaccine, up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development.
Vaccine Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure immunological and virological outcomes in vaccine trials.
Cure Intervention Development	Development of cure interventions up to the stage of clinical trials or commercial development.
Antiviral Drug Development	Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy.
Drug Resistance and Toxicity Testing	Development of tests for antiviral drug resistance and toxicity.
Cure Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure appropriate immunological and virological outcomes in clinical trials of cure interventions.
Diagnostics and Prognostics	Development of diagnostics and prognostics for the modern era, including point-of-care tests.
Molecular Virology Tools	Development of molecular virology tools for tracking the HBV epidemic.

HTLV-1 Research and Development Area	Description
Diagnostics and Prognostics	Development of diagnostics and prognostics for HTLV-1 infection and associated diseases.
Molecular Virology Tools	Development of molecular virology tools for tracking the HTLV-1 epidemic.
Antiviral Drug Development	Development of antiviral targets and drug strategies, including immunotherapy.
Vaccine Development	Development of novel preventive or therapeutic vaccines.
Vaccine and Therapeutic Trial Assays	Development of assay systems to measure immunological and virological outcomes from vaccine, immunotherapeutic, or antiviral trials.

APPLICATION PROCESS – HOW TO APPLY

Step	Action
1. Review the Funding Guidelines	Carefully read the ACH4 Funding Guidelines, including eligibility requirements, assessment criteria, funding conditions and allowable expenses.
2. Confirm Eligibility	Ensure all investigators and the proposed project meet the eligibility requirements. Complete the Eligibility Criteria Declaration.
3. Prepare Application Documents	Complete all required sections of the EOI form and prepare any supporting documentation. Current ACH4 grant holders must also submit a Progress Report for each active ACH4-funded project.
4. Obtain Institutional Approval	Liaise with your institution's Research Office to ensure all internal approvals and authorisations are completed prior to submission.
5. Submit via the ACH4 Portal	Applications must be submitted through the ACH4 online application portal by the Administering Institution or authorised Research Office representative. **Important:** Upon successful submission of your EOI, an automatic email confirmation will be sent to the email address provided. If you do not receive this confirmation, please contact Jo Reidy to ensure your submission has been received.
6. Submit Before the Deadline	Ensure all application materials are received before the published closing date and time. Late or incomplete applications may not be considered for assessment.
7. Outcome Notification	Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by **8 December 2026**.
8. Application Feedback	Feedback will be available upon request once application outcomes have been released. Applicants wishing to receive feedback should contact **Jo Reidy** following notification of the funding outcomes.

FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Details
Page Limit	Maximum of four (4) A4 pages for the proposal. Material exceeding the page limit will not be considered. *(Note. This does not include the Eligibility Criteria Declaration on page 5 – Applications will not be assessed without this declaration).*
Font	Calibri, 12 pt.
Margins	Minimum 2 cm margins on all sides.
Header	Include the CI-A surname in the top right-hand corner of every page.
File Format	Applications must be submitted as a PDF.
File Naming Convention	ACH4_2027 APP_SURNAME.pdf (e.g. ACH4_2027 APP_SMITH.pdf).
Application Template	Applications must be completed using the official ACH4 application template and comply with all requirements outlined in the Guidelines.
Research Office Contact Details	Research Office contact details must be current and accurate for correspondence purposes (include name, email and phone details).
Submission Method	Applications are to be submitted by the Administering Institute or University Research Officer and via the ACH4 online portal: https://ach4.org.au/apply/. if you have any issues with the portal please contact: joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au
Intellectual Property	Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from their Business Development Manager or equivalent institutional representative, particularly where projects may generate novel intellectual property or commercialisation opportunities.

PAGE 1 REQUIREMENTS

Section	Details Required
Administering Institution / Research Office Contact Details	Name of the administering institution, including Research Office contact details (name, email address and phone number).
Application Title	Full title of the proposed research project.
Confirmation of Australian Residency/Visa Status	Confirmation of Australian residency, citizenship, permanent residency or visa status.
Area of Research	Nominate one of the following areas: Antiviral Strategies, Diagnostics/Prognostics or Vaccines/Prevention/Immunotherapy.
Chief Investigator Details	Details of all Chief Investigators (CIs), including names, titles, positions, institutional affiliations, addresses and contact details.
Other Applications	Applicants may submit one application as CI-A only. List all other Expressions of Interest (EOIs) in the current funding round on which you are participating as a CI. National collaborative groups are encouraged.
Current and Pending/Future Funding	Provide details of all current and pending grant funding related to HIV, Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV) and HTLV-1 for 2026 and 2027 for the CI-A only. This information is not required for other investigators.
Funding Impact Statement	In 2-3 sentences (maximum 50 words), explain how the requested ACH4 funding will enhance the feasibility of the project and increase its likelihood of success. Describe how the funds will be used to achieve the project objectives, leverage existing resources or funding and support the outcomes that will be delivered.
Proposed Budget	Specify the total amount of funding requested from ACH4 for this project.
Funding Purpose Category	Select the option that best describes the purpose of the requested funding: 1. **Supplementing Existing Funding** - Supporting or extending a currently funded project. 2. **Seed Funding for a Young Investigator** - Providing initial support to establish an early-career investigator's research program. 3. **Leveraging Existing Funding** - Strengthening or maximising the impact of funding from other sources.

Section	Details Required
	4. **Adding a New Line of Investigation** - Supporting a novel research direction or expanding an existing project into a new area.
Eligible Expenditure	ACH4 funding may only be used for salary costs and consumables.
Ineligible Expenditure	Travel and equipment costs are not eligible and must not be included in the budget.
Project Summary (Lay Description)	Include a short project description of no more than 50 words written in plain language for a non-scientific audience. The summary should describe the project at a high level, avoid technical jargon where possible and not overstate the significance or anticipated outcomes of the research.
Example text.	*The eradication ('cure') of 'dormant' HIV from the body is a priority for current HIV research. Here we aim to wake up HIV in dormantly infected cells with interferon and then kill them with genetically engineered "CAR" T cells – to replace the natural immune cells suppressed by HIV.*
Ethics and Regulatory Requirements	Indicate whether Human Research Ethics, Animal Ethics, OGTR and/or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) approvals are required. Confirm whether these approvals and licences have already been obtained.

Important: If Human Research Ethics, Animal Ethics, OGTR and/or IBC approvals are required, funded work cannot commence until the appropriate approvals/licences have been obtained and copies provided to ACH4.

PAGES 2-3: RESEARCH PROJECT & RESEARCH PLAN

Section	Requirements
Introduction	Brief background, rationale, hypotheses and specific aims.
Research Plan	Description of the research approach, methodology and planned samples (where applicable).
Significance and Impact	Relevance to the ACH4 Strategic Plan, anticipated health-care outcomes, alignment with relevant National Strategies and expected timelines for translation.

PAGE 4 REQUIREMENTS

Section	Requirements
References	Maximum of eight (8) references.
Translation to Health Care Outcomes	Describe how the project will contribute to health-care outcomes aligned with the HIV, Hepatitis and Indigenous Health National Strategies (one paragraph or 1/3 page).
CI-A Eligibility	Briefly explain why the applicant is appropriately placed to lead the project as Chief Investigator A (maximum one paragraph).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA DECLARATION FOR CHIEF INVESTIGATOR – A (CI-A)

Section	Requirements
Eligibility Criteria Declaration	Refer to the declaration on page 3 to ensure you have met the requirements. Complete the declaration (page 5 of application) Applications will not be assessed without this declaration.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Section	Details
Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)	Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by an independent Scientific Advisory Committee comprised of experienced, non-conflicted, internationally recognised scientists with expertise in viral diagnostics, vaccines, immunotherapy, antiviral drug development and translational research.
Applicant Guidance	Applications should be written in a manner that enables reviewers outside an applicant's immediate area of expertise to understand the project's rationale, objectives, significance and proposed outcomes. Clear, concise and accessible language is encouraged.
Assessment Panel	Applications will be evaluated by experts in virology, immunology, biology, biotechnology and clinician-scientists with experience in translating basic research into clinical practice.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed, graded and prioritised based on:

- Scientific merit and innovation.
- Feasibility of the proposed research.
- Translational potential and anticipated health impact.
- Alignment with ACH4 strategic priorities.
- Alignment with relevant National Strategies, including:
    - First National Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Research Strategy 2021-2025.
    - Fourth National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030.
    - Fifth National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2024-2030.
    - Fifth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy.
    - Sixth National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023-2030.
    - Ninth National HIV Strategy 2024-2030.
- Available funding and overall project feasibility.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Details
Budget Justification	A detailed budget justification must be included and align with the Guidance Notes.
Eligibility Criteria Declaration	Refer to the declaration on page 3, ensure you have met the requirements. Applications will not be assessed without this declaration.
Collaborative Applications	National and international collaborations are encouraged; however, all funding must be administered and expended within Australia.
Number of Applications	An individual may act as CI-A on one application only in the current funding round.
Disclosure of Participation	Applicants must declare any additional applications on which they are listed as a Chief Investigator.
Eligibility	Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements specified for the funding round.
Ineligible Applications	Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements or comply with the Guidelines may not be considered for funding.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions	Response
Who is eligible to apply for an ACH4 Grant? Does the Chief Investigator A (CI-A) need to be an Australian citizen, and can overseas-based investigators be included on an application?	**The Chief Investigator A (CI-A) must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident, be based in Australia, and administer the grant through an eligible Australian institution.** Overseas-based investigators and international collaborators may be included as co-investigators and ACH4 encourages collaborative and multidisciplinary research teams, including appropriate international partnerships. However, all ACH4 grant funding must be administered by an Australian institution and expended within Australia.
Can grant funds be expended outside Australia?	**No.** ACH4 grant funding must be administered and spent within Australia and cannot be transferred or expended overseas. Applicants should ensure that all budgeted activities, services, and project-related expenditures are undertaken within Australia and comply with ACH4 funding requirements.
Are PhD students eligible to apply for an ACH4 Grant?	**No.** Individuals currently enrolled in a PhD program are not eligible to apply for ACH4 funding as a Chief Investigator A (CI-A). However, PhD students may be included as a co-investigator where their involvement is critical to the successful completion of the proposed research.
Can a PhD student be included on an ACH4 grant application?	**Yes.** While PhD students cannot apply as a CI-A, they may be named as a co-investigator if they play an important role in delivering the proposed project.
Are early postdoctoral researchers eligible to apply as Chief Investigator A (CI-A)?	**No.** Postdoctoral researchers who are within three years of completing their PhD are considered to be in a training position for the purposes of these awards and are not eligible to apply as CI-A.
Can multiple applications be submitted from the same laboratory group?	**Yes.** Multiple applications may be submitted from the same laboratory group. However, to ensure equitable distribution of funding across research groups, restrictions apply at the funding stage.

Can more than one grant be awarded to the same laboratory group?	**No.** Only one successful grant may be awarded to a laboratory group in any funding round, regardless of whether the laboratory leader is listed as the CI-A or holds another role on the application.
What happens if multiple applications from the same laboratory group are ranked highly?	If multiple applications are submitted from the same laboratory group and are ranked highly enough for funding, only one application from that group can receive an award. The final funding decision will take this restriction into account to ensure fair access to funding across laboratory groups.
How should an ACH4 EOI be submitted?	ACH4 applications must be submitted by the Administering Institute or University Research Office via the ACH4 online application portal: https://ach4.org.au/apply/ Applications submitted directly by individual applicants to the ACH4 Administration Officer will not be accepted. Applicants should work with their institution's Research Office to ensure all required approvals are obtained prior to submission. If you experience any issues accessing or using the online portal, please contact **joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au** for assistance.
Should the progress report be a comprehensive list of all funding, or can researchers choose only relevant grants that may be used to leverage the proposed research?	Only relevant.
Should Associate Investigators be included on EOIs?	This information can be added under Details of all Chief Investigators if you wish to include, however, it is not a requirement.

KEY ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES

- **Chief Investigator A (CI-A) eligibility**
  - Must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.
  - Must be based in Australia.
  - Must administer the grant through an eligible Australian institution.
- **International collaborators**
  - Overseas-based investigators may be included as co-investigators.
  - International collaborations are encouraged where they strengthen the research.
  - All ACH4 funding must be administered by an Australian institution and spent within Australia.
- **Use of grant funds**
  - ACH4 grant funds must be administered and expended within Australia.
  - Grant funds cannot be transferred or spent overseas.
- **PhD students**
  - Current PhD students are not eligible to apply as CI-A.
  - PhD students may be included as co-investigators where their involvement is essential to the project.
- **Early postdoctoral researchers**
  - Researchers within three years of completing their PhD are considered to be in a training position and are not eligible to apply as CI-A.
- **Multiple applications**
  - Multiple applications may be submitted from the same laboratory group.
  - However, only one grant can be awarded to a laboratory group in a funding round, regardless of the role held by the laboratory leader on the application.
- **Application submission**
  - Applications must be submitted by the Administering Institute or University Research Office via the ACH4 online application portal.
  - Applications submitted directly to the administration officer by individual applicants will not be accepted.
  - Institutional approvals must be obtained prior to submission.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review all relevant documentation before preparing and submitting an application. Failure to comply with the requirements outlined in the funding guidelines may result in an application being deemed ineligible or excluded from assessment.

For questions regarding eligibility, application requirements, submission processes, or grant conditions, please contact Joanne Reidy prior to the application closing date.

Website: www.ach4.org.au

Email: joanne.reidy@wimr.org.au

Important: Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements, are incomplete, are submitted after the closing date, or otherwise fail to comply with the requirements outlined in these Guidelines may be deemed ineligible and may not proceed to assessment. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by 8 December 2026. Feedback will be available upon request following the release of outcomes and may be obtained by contacting Jo Reidy.

Executive of the Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research (ACH4)

Professor Anthony Cunningham AO (Director)
Professor Andrew Lloyd AM (and Chair, IVRN Steering Committee)
Professor Damian Purcell
Professor David Anderson
Professor Gilda Tachedjian
Dr Margaret Littlejohn
A/Professor Thomas Tu