



SPP-ARC Funding Guidelines

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Version: 1.1

Introduction

Striving for Pandemic Preparedness – The Alberta Research Consortium (SPP-ARC) is dedicated to strengthening Alberta’s ability to prepare for and respond to future pandemics. SPP-ARC supports excellence in research, training, infrastructure, and knowledge mobilization.

This document provides guidance on:

1. Applying for SPP-ARC funding opportunities.
2. Eligible and ineligible expenses.
3. Administrative requirements, including reporting and public acknowledgement.

Compliance with these guidelines is a condition for current and any future funding (see Part III for details).

For any questions related to SPP-ARC funding, please contact:

Claudia Torres, SPP-ARC Program Coordinator – ctorresc@ualberta.ca

Part I - Applying for SPP-ARC Funding

1.1 Criteria for Funding

Since 2022, SPP-ARC has engaged investigators across several faculties at the University of Alberta to establish a comprehensive research and training program focused on the discovery, development and assessment of vaccines and antiviral drugs. To date, the consortium has funded research and infrastructure projects for more than 35 members and over 100 trainees. The initial engagement stage is completed, and SPP-ARC is now selecting highly successful research programs for expanded funding. All proposals will be evaluated by the Executive Committee. SPP-ARC will only consider applications for research and training funding that clearly align with its mission and vision. Proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria, including but not limited to:

1. Alignment with SPP-ARC's mission and vision.
2. Potential contributions on "Day One" of a pandemic.
3. Addressing unmet medical and scientific needs targeting gaps or high-priority challenges in the field.
4. The potential for translation.
5. Strong likelihood of success.
6. Demonstrated progress and productivity on previous and/or current SPP-ARC funding.
7. Proposals should highlight innovation and any pre-existing intellectual property (IP) from SPP-ARC-supported research.
8. Potential for commercialization or future technology development.
9. Proposals must lead to internationally competitive capabilities.
10. Projects should support interdisciplinary training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) in the areas of virology, immunology, biochemistry, medicinal chemistry and structural biology.

1.2 SPP-ARC Funding Opportunities

1.2.1 Platform Grant (up to \$3,000,000.00 over 3 years)

This mechanism supports major research programs with multiple investigators that substantially advance SPP-ARC's mandate. The potential for commercialization and impact on "Day One" of a pandemic are main criteria. Proposals must meet the highest standards of the ten criteria mentioned above.

1.2.2 Project Grant (up to \$200,000.00 over 2 years)

Intended for focused, well-defined projects that build on previous work funded by SPPARC. Proposals should demonstrate clear progress from earlier funding and outline feasible deliverables. Team efforts are preferred.

1.2.3 Support Grant (up to \$40,000.00 for 1 year)

This mechanism supports specific, well-defined tasks that are necessary to complete ongoing SPP-ARC projects or to test an innovative concept.

1.2.4 Infrastructure Grant (up to \$250,000.00 for 1 year)

This mechanism supports specific needs for infrastructure that is essentially required for SPP-ARC's research efforts.

1.3 Application Process

The following process applies to all SPP-ARC funding mechanisms.

1. Applicants must first contact the Program Coordinator at ctorresc@ualberta.ca to schedule a meeting with the Executive Committee. Applicants and committee members will discuss the scientific merit of the proposal and the financial requirements. Following the meeting, the committee will provide recommendations.
2. If the Executive Committee recommends moving forward, applicants will receive the required application forms. In addition to the completed forms, applicants must submit the following:
 - a. Platform Grant: A 10-page full proposal, with additional pages permitted for appendices (e.g. additional figures), references, milestones and the detailed budget.
 - b. Project Grant: A 6-page full proposal, with additional pages permitted for appendices, references, milestones and the detailed budget.
 - c. Support Grant: A 3-page proposal focused on objectives, feasibility, approach, expected outcomes and budget.
 - d. Infrastructure Grant: A 2-page proposal describing the proposed equipment, its significance to the program, and plans for installation and maintenance.
3. The Executive Committee will evaluate the application based on the criteria outlined in Section 1. Funding decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

1.4 Travel & Training (TNT) Grants

SPP-ARC offers Travel & Training (TNT) Grants to support trainees in acquiring technical skills that are complementary to research related to pandemic preparedness and the development of countermeasures. Should a trainee not have access to a certain training or technique at the University of Alberta, they may apply for a TNT grant for travel to another institution or organization to receive additional training.

1.4.1 Funding

Up to \$20,000 CAD per application to cover the costs for living and travel expenses, including accommodation, transportation, meals and travel documentation.

Operational costs for research are not covered through this mechanism.

1.4.2 Eligibility

Open to MSc students, PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and research staff in SPP-ARC member laboratories.

- Training must focus on acquiring knowledge or skills currently not available at the University of Alberta or partner institutions.
- Training must align with SPP-ARC's mission and vision.
- Only future travel is eligible; retroactive applications will not be considered.

1.4.3 Application Requirements

1. Completed Training Proposal Form.
2. Supporting documents, depending on type of training:
 - a. Workshops/bootcamps: Abridged Itemized Itinerary Form and proof of eligibility to register.
 - b. Visiting laboratory/institution/company: Institution Information and Itemized Itinerary Form and invitation letter from host institution signed by the visiting Principal Investigator and their department.
3. Letter of support from the trainees' supervisor.
4. Current CV.

1.4.4 Submission

Email completed applications to spparc@ualberta.ca and CC: rybkina@ualberta.ca

1.4.5 Deadlines

- Applications accepted on a rolling basis.
- Adjudication may take up to 4 weeks; applicants are strongly encouraged to apply at least 2 months prior to travel.

Part II - Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

2.1 Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses must be directly attributable to the approved project and necessary for achieving its objectives. Eligible categories include:

2.1.1 Knowledge Mobilization

- Travel is limited to up to \$3,000.00 (total) for conference attendance (includes transportation, registration fees, per diem/meals, accommodation, etc.).

- Conditions:
 - Funds may be drawn from existing operating/team accounts.
 - Trainees must have been accepted to present a poster or talk.
 - Principal Investigators are encouraged, but not required, to present.
 - The presentation must be linked to a SPP-ARC-funded project.
 - The conference must be aligned with SPP-ARC's mission and vision.
 - A completed [Conference Attendance Funding Form](#) must be submitted.
- Note: Trainee eligibility does not depend on their salary being SPP-ARC-funded.
- Travel directly required for research activities (mileage reimbursed according to University of Alberta guidelines).
- Hospitality and travel-related expenses must be a direct cost of research for which the funds were awarded, with benefits directly attributable to the grant; be effective and economical; not result in personal gain for members of the grant team and in accordance with the University of Alberta's relevant policies and processes.

2.1.2 Equipment

- Minor equipment up to \$5,000.00.
- Other equipment up to \$250,000.00 are allowed with strong justification and alignment with platform development.
- Computer and computing equipment or software up to \$10,000.00 needed for the project.

2.1.3 Personnel

- Salaries and benefits for research staff, technicians, and trainees at all levels.
- Graduate and undergraduate student support in accordance with institutional policies.

2.1.4 Supplies, Materials and Services

- Laboratory reagents, consumables, specialized materials.
- Computer/CPU time, data access charges and library resources.
- Publication costs (including open access publishing).
- Patent costs to protect intellectual property generated from projects supported by SPP-ARC.
- General services and other professional/technical support for research as per institutional policies and in alignment with the objectives of the grant.

2.2 Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are not eligible for support under SPP-ARC funding:

- Office furniture and general IT equipment not essential to research (e.g. laptops, printers).
- Alcohol.
- Professional memberships or personal subscriptions.
- Entertainment or gifts.
- Relocation, moving and immigration costs for non-academic personnel.
- Indirect costs, overhead, or administrative charges beyond those approved in the grant.
- Construction or major renovations.
- Fines, penalties, or litigation costs.
- Instrument warranty costs are not eligible for SPP-ARC funding.
- Expenses not directly contributing to approved project objectives.

Part III - Compliance, Acknowledgement, and Administration

3.1 Public Acknowledgement of Financial Support

Acknowledgement of SPP-ARC financial assistance is mandatory in all communications, publications, presentations, and events funded in whole or in part by SPP-ARC.

Examples:

1. "Supported [in part] by the Alberta Ministry of Technology and Innovation through SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness–The Alberta Research Consortium)."
2. "Funded [in part] by SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness – The Alberta Research Consortium)."
3. "This project is funded [in part] by SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness – The Alberta Research Consortium)."
4. "This project has been made possible [in part] by SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness – The Alberta Research Consortium)."
5. "This study was supported by a grant from the Alberta Ministry of Technology and Innovation through SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness – The Alberta Research Consortium)."
6. "This study was supported [in part] by the Alberta Ministry of Technology and Innovation through SPP-ARC (Striving for Pandemic Preparedness - The Alberta Research Consortium)."

3.2 Reporting Requirements

- Annual progress reports are required for all multi-year awards. These reports must summarize scientific progress, key milestones, HQP training, knowledge mobilization activities, and any significant changes to the project plan. Reports should be limited to 3 pages.
- A final scientific and financial report is required for all grants within 30 days of the project end date. Reports should be limited to 3 pages.
- SPP-ARC may request additional updates or information if needed to assess overall program impact.

3.3 Financial Administration

- Funds are administered by the Principal Investigator in accordance with institutional policies.
- Annual financial reports must be submitted in accordance with SPP-ARC reporting deadlines.
- Reallocation of more than 20% between budget categories requires prior written approval.
- Unspent funds will be returned to the sponsor unless otherwise approved.
- SPP-ARC will actively monitor project expenditures. A security authorization will be submitted to provide eTRAC access for SPP-ARC financial oversight, and the Principal Investigator will be required to approve this access online.

3.4 No-Cost Extensions

- No-cost extensions (NCEs) may be considered to allow additional time to complete approved project objectives if well justified.
- NCEs are only permitted when:
 - The project remains scientifically active and aligned with its original objectives; and
 - The extension is needed to complete remaining work and not to use unspent funds for new aims.
- Requests for a no-cost extension must:
 - Be submitted in writing by the Principal Investigator (via email to SPP-ARC) at least 60 days prior to the current end date; and
 - Include a brief justification, a summary of progress to date, a revised timeline, and an updated spending plan for remaining funds.
 - Extensions are typically granted for up to 12 months and are not guaranteed. Approval is at the discretion of the Executive Committee, and decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

3.5 Accountability and Compliance

- The Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring compliance.
- Misuse of funds may result in suspension, termination, or repayment of any current or future grants. The Executive Committee will decide on misuse and will act accordingly. Consent by the applicant is not required and decisions are final and not subject to appeal.
- Questions about eligibility should be directed to SPP-ARC in advance.

3.6 Termination of Funding

- Awards may be terminated if conditions are not met.
- Unspent funds must be returned to SPP-ARC upon termination.

3.7 Contact Information

For inquiries regarding funding applications, current forms, eligible expenses, travel, or acknowledgement requirements, please contact:

Claudia Torres, Program Coordinator – ctorresc@ualberta.ca