



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

hrc **nz** Health Research Council
of New Zealand
Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa

2025 Health Delivery Research Investment Signal

Understanding the scope
and intent of the HRC's
investment in health
delivery research for 2025

Discovering a healthier tomorrow



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HRC objectives for investment

The HRC supports health delivery research that directly informs changes to policy, practice or systems in the New Zealand health and disability sector. The HRC seeks applications that are within the scope of the 2025 Health Delivery Research Investment Signal (this document) and meet the requirements for each health delivery funding opportunity set out in the respective application guidelines published on HRC Gateway. Health delivery proposals should have specific research objectives that can tangibly contribute to improved health outcomes in New Zealand. Meaningful collaboration with others to collectively achieve health gains and deliver maximum value for the New Zealand public's investment in health research is strongly encouraged.

HRC priorities

All HRC investment must have a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders, with a focus on areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs¹.

New Zealand's investment in health research must contribute to achieving the goals of the health system and the Science, Innovation and Technology (SI&T) sector. It is important to consider and identify how your research will add value and contribute to these goals and wider system performance. The vision for the health system is timely access to quality healthcare². A key focus for the science system is to harness the benefits of research and innovation to drive economic transformation.

Why invest in health delivery research?

Health delivery research directly impacts healthcare and health outcomes for New Zealanders. Excellent and robust health delivery research helps shape effective models and ways to deliver care, to meet increasing cost pressures on the health system and rising public expectations for healthcare. The importance of health delivery research is emphasised in the New Zealand Health Research Strategy³.

What does this investment aim to achieve?

By investing in health delivery research, the HRC aims to:

- strengthen the use of evidence to inform decision-making in health practice and improve the health system
- improve the quality, safety, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of healthcare
- improve equity of access, and timeliness, consistency and continuity of care for all New Zealanders.

We do this by:

- improving translation and uptake of research findings in policy, practice and systems
- growing capacity, capability and engagement of the research workforce in health and disability sector settings
- responding to research needs and opportunities in real-world, practical settings
- investing in a way that is people-focused and connected.

¹ Areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs are identified in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027. Available at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2024-06/government-policy-statement-on-health-2024-2027-v4.pdf>

² The Government Policy statement on Health 2024-2027 outlines 5 priority areas: 5 non-communicable diseases; 5 modifiable behaviours; 5 health targets; and 5 mental health targets.

³ New Zealand Health Research Strategy, 2017. Available at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2017-06/nz-health-research-strategy-jun17.pdf>

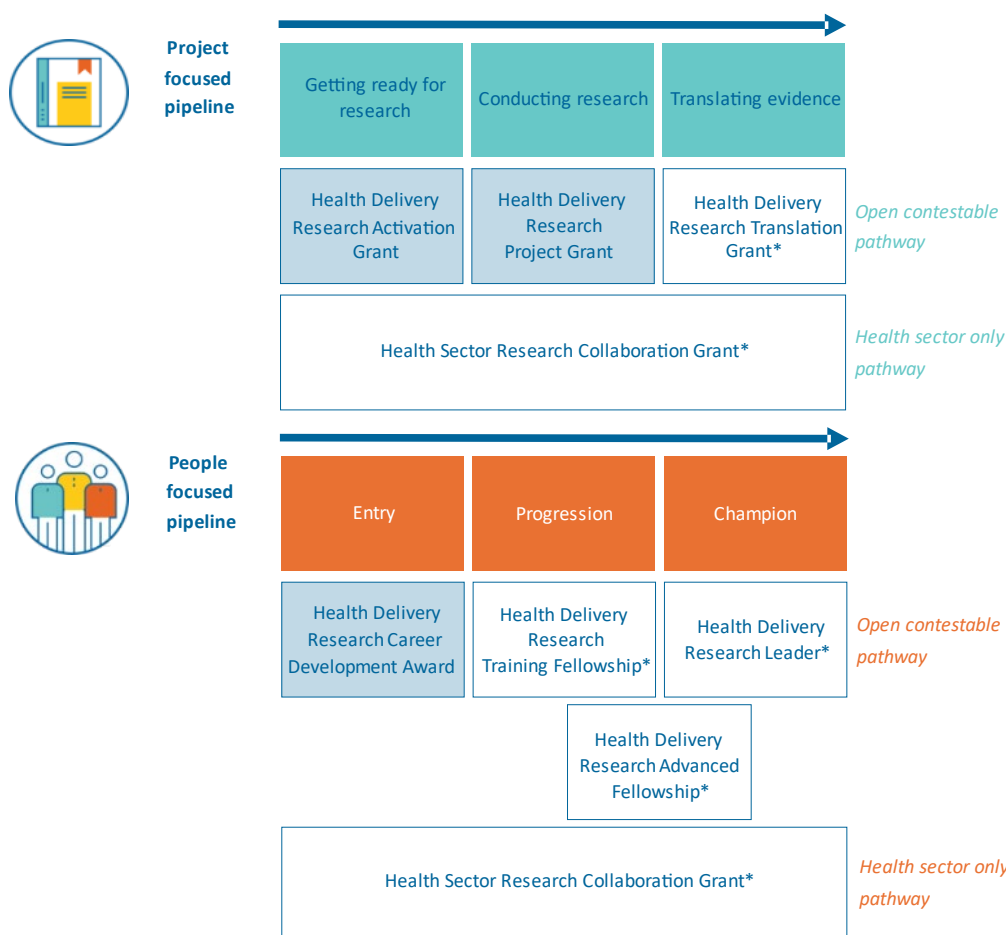
2025 Health Delivery Research funding opportunities

Prospective applicants can use the information in Appendix A to identify the most suitable funding opportunity. Instructions for applying and information about the assessment processes are set out in the guidelines for each grant type.

The following opportunities are available in the HRC Health Delivery Research Investment Round:

- Health Delivery Research Activation Grant
- Health Delivery Research Project Grant
- Health Delivery Research Career Development Award

The HRC intends to roll out planned health delivery research funding opportunities in several phases to complete a full range of funding support, including a project pipeline to enable and develop research projects, and a people pipeline to enable and develop researchers.



* Available in a future Health Delivery Research funding round

Funding decisions will be made by the HRC. The distribution of the funding budget across the funding opportunities in this round is expected to fluctuate based on evidence needs, research opportunities, and the number and quality of applications.

HRC's key focus areas for the 2025 round

All research in scope of the 2025 Health Delivery Research Investment Signal will be considered for funding in the 2025 round. Priority will be given to research that demonstrates strong alignment with HRC priorities; clear potential for improving health outcomes and contributing to wider health and science system goals; and a collaborative approach to achieving health gains and maximum value for public investment in health research. However, the HRC also encourages:

- health services research, led by or involving people working across the health and disability sector (including clinical and non-clinical roles)
- cross-disciplinary research teams with a focus on developing early-stage researchers in a safe environment, i.e. with adequate support and supervision.

Scope of health delivery research supported by the HRC

To be considered within scope for funding in this round, the proposed research must:

1. have the potential to directly inform changes to **health delivery** policy, practice or systems, **and**
2. demonstrate a clear connection to a **healthcare need**.

Health delivery can include the delivery of healthcare, such as through prevention, detection, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, care and/or support, at all levels (i.e. primary through to tertiary and community-based care), and at a local, regional and/or national level in New Zealand, acknowledging that international connections can support this.

Healthcare needs are expected to be identified with involvement of health delivery sector leadership or meaningful end-user involvement, and substantiated by evidence of a gap in knowledge. As such, end-user engagement is expected, comprising consumer, clinical, health provider, support worker, community or population collaboration and/or partnership from the outset of the research proposal and throughout the research process.

The proposed research must align with HRC priorities by including a clear line of sight to improving health outcomes, due consideration of areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs⁴, and support the vision for the health system of timely access to quality healthcare⁵.

The following examples are research areas commonly in scope of health delivery, acknowledging that research may relate to more than one. Kaupapa Māori approaches to research are supported across all these disciplines.

- **Health services**
Research to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health professionals and the healthcare system, investigating equity of and access to healthcare, and the quality and cost of healthcare to improve the health of individuals and populations.
- **Health economics**
Research into economic aspects of healthcare delivery, including the value of healthcare systems, interventions (prevention and treatment), and user experiences.

⁴ Areas of highest health need and communities with the highest health needs are identified in the Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027.

⁵ The Government Policy statement on Health 2024-2027 outlines 5 priority areas: 5 non-communicable diseases; 5 modifiable behaviours; 5 health targets; and 5 mental health targets.

- **Health technology**
Research on innovations (technologies, tools and devices) where these are likely to impact on clinical practice, healthcare service provision or health systems. Please note that the technology itself is not in scope for funding.
- **Clinical (later stages)**
Clinical trials of new or existing clinical interventions where focused on informing immediate changes to healthcare delivery for the intended health benefit of the New Zealand population (including results that can be applied in multiple regions or settings) and where study protocols and/or interventions have been adapted to New Zealand populations or conditions. For example, comparative effectiveness trials.
- **Implementation science**
Research on methods and strategies (including evaluation) to promote the uptake of viable health research findings in policy, practice or systems to improve the quality and effectiveness of healthcare. Looking at what works, for whom, and in which circumstances, and identifying areas for potential (accessible and equitable) adaptation and scale-up.
- **Social science**
Research into human society and social relationships to support health delivery, with a focus on equity in our health system.

Not in scope

Research that represents solely business as usual operations is not within scope of the 2025 Health Delivery Research Investment Signal; noting that health delivery research can interact with other areas of health systems improvement.

The HRC offers many other funding opportunities in related areas for research not within scope of the 2025 Health Delivery Research Investment Signal.

New Zealand Health Research Attributes

Research funders, research providers and research teams are tasked with advancing the vision of the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework⁶. HRC-funded research must meet the New Zealand Health Research Attributes:

- Why in New Zealand?
- Mana Tāngata
- Excellence
- Impact
- Equity

The requirements to satisfy the New Zealand Health Research Attributes are built into the application and assessment processes for each funding opportunity set out in the respective guidelines for each. Applicants are encouraged to ensure they clearly articulate how their proposed research meets these attributes.

⁶ Available here: <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/new-zealand-health-research-prioritisation-framework>

Appendix A: Identifying the most suitable Health Delivery Research funding opportunity

Project focused pipeline



Health Delivery Research Activation Grant

To provide support to establish health delivery research evidence needs or research opportunities, or develop research capacity, before applying for further health delivery funding.

Examples of research activation activities may include relationship development; priority setting; literature review; skill or capacity building; or Kaupapa Māori and Pacific health research approaches.

Health Delivery Research Project Grant

To undertake health delivery research projects where there is a clear connection to a health sector research need, a demonstrated evidence gap, and consideration of knowledge translation.

May include research in health technologies; health services; health economics; social science; clinical (later stages); implementation science; or an interdisciplinary combination of these research areas. Kaupapa Māori and Pacific health research approaches are encouraged.

Health Delivery Translation Grant
Available in a future health delivery round

Support for the next steps of research, where viable research results indicate a readiness to move research findings through the project pipeline explicitly and proactively.

Translation activities may include testing and evaluation; evidence synthesis; dissemination and coordination (where additional gains can be made to the contracted requirements already contained in HRC grant contracts).

Health Sector Research Collaboration Grant
Available in a future health delivery round

A protected pathway, funding support for healthcare or health service delivery organisations* to engage in health delivery research, intensify research in health delivery settings, and ensure research adequately responds to health sector, patient and community needs. Funding can include support for health delivery research activation and research activities across the project pipeline.

* All health providers are also encouraged to apply for the other HRC Health Delivery Research funding opportunities.



People focused pipeline

