

Connect to Care Grant Guidelines

Background

Recent evidence has illustrated that individuals with a smartphone have better access to medical care and information.¹ It has also been demonstrated that individuals with a smartphone are able to be reached more consistently by their care provider, access important information about health emergencies², and receive mental health and substance use support.³ For many people, mobile devices remain out of reach, which creates barriers to equitable access to services. Identified **equity considerations include**, but are not limited to:

1. Clients with limited financial means do not have access to smartphones and for those that do, the costs of phone and data plans may restrict access to calls, and to video calls in particular.
2. Access to computers and home broadband internet remains out of the financial grasp of many.
3. Challenges with digital literacy, for example among elderly and those with limited prior access to technology, may limit their ability to engage in the breadth of virtual care options.
4. Clients with limited proficiency in English or French may face difficulties in accessing online patient portals and video visit applications without tailored assistance.
5. Some clients may struggle to find the physical space to safely and securely access the privacy required for virtual care. For example, for those living in shelters or other shared facilities, it can be difficult to find a quiet and safe area to discuss confidential matters.
6. Access and reliability of cellular and internet connectivity continues to be a challenge in rural and remote communities and poses a risk to the deployment of virtual health solutions in this region.

Grant Description

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC and Fraser Health are excited to introduce a new grant opportunity to promote virtual health equity by connecting people to services. Virtual care allows people to access health and social services from anywhere.

The *Connect to Care* grant funding opportunity is part of our commitment to exploring technological solutions to increase access to health and social services.

Each successful applicant is eligible to receive:

1. **200 smartphones**, each loaded with \$10 of talk time (30 minutes), with the possibility of re-loading.
2. Up to **\$25,000 of grant funding** to support project management and evaluation.

1: Oshima SM, Tait SD, Thomas SM, Fayanju OM, Ingraham K, Barrett NJ, Hwang ES. Association of Smartphone Ownership and Internet Use With Markers of Health Literacy and Access: Cross-sectional Survey Study of Perspectives From Project PLACE (Population Level Approaches to Cancer Elimination). *J Med Internet Res*. 2021 Jun 9;23(6):e24947. doi: 10.2196/24947. PMID: 34106076; PMCID: PMC8262672.

2: Kazezman G, Mercado M, Hulme J, Somers A. Prescribing Phones to Address Health Equity Needs in the COVID-19 Era: The PHONE-CONNECT Program. *J Med Internet Res*. 2021 Apr 6;23(4):e23914. doi: 10.2196/23914. PMID: 33760753; PMCID: PMC8025912.

3: Jongbloed, K. (2020). *The phone is my lifeline : impact of the Cedar Project WeTel mHealth program for HIV treatment and prevention among young Indigenous people who have used drugs* (T). University of British Columbia. Retrieved from <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0389819>

Eligibility Requirements

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications are open to any Fraser Health department or community agency/organization that provides services within the Fraser Health region.

Preference will be given to applicants working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, organizations or governments.

Applicants must:

- Obtain consent from clients for the Fraser Health grant administration team to access smartphone usage data
- Provide a proposed plan for smartphone distribution
- Provide a proposed budget
- Work with the Fraser Health grant administration team to develop a project evaluation plan

Eligible Expenses

- Operating costs (e.g. data collection, participation recruitment, travel)
- Personnel to support the project
- Office supplies and services
- Honoraria for clients
- Dedicated time for evaluation (completed with Fraser Health grant administration team)

Ineligible Expenses

- Pre-existing staffing
- Capital development costs
- Profit-making activities, programs and/or projects
- Ongoing operating expenses for established programs and projects
- Cash prizes

Funding

Each successful applicant is eligible to receive up to **\$25,000** of grant funding to aid in the distribution of smartphones to clients. Funding must be used by **March 31, 2023** unless otherwise stipulated. Unused program funds remaining at the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year will be returned to the funder.

Key Dates

Applications open	January 13, 2021
Deadline for application submission	February 28, 2022
Notification of application results	March 18, 2022
Funding and smartphones distributed	March 31, 2022
Mid-year activity progress report	October 1, 2022
Deadline for completion of program	March 31, 2023
Final reporting and deliverables due	May 31, 2023

Key Deliverables

A final evaluation report must be submitted that demonstrates the program outcomes. Fraser Health grant administration team can work alongside grant recipients to create an evaluation plan.

Mid-year activity progress report	October 1, 2022
End of year financial audit	May 31, 2023
End of year evaluation report*	May 31, 2023

**Including any program communication materials created*

Review Committee and Scoring

Applications will be reviewed by an adjudication committee of community representatives (i.e. SPARC BC), patient partners, health care decision-makers, and subject matter experts.

The committee will be considering applications on the criteria of:

Overall grant alignment: Does the application explore technological solutions to address health and/or social service access barriers?

Impact: Does the application describe why there is a need for this program, and how clients will be positively impacted?

Client and family centred: Does the application demonstrate strong connections to clients and families impacted by technology access barriers?

Program feasibility: Does the application demonstrate a feasible approach to the distribution of smartphones and use of grant funding?

Application Requirements

- Please submit files in the format provided (i.e. PDF and Microsoft Excel)
- Please limit text to the maximum word count provided
- Please use the following naming convention for submissions:
[Organization&Department_FileName_MMDDYYYY]
e.g. FraserHealthBurnabyHospitalEmergencyDepartment_Budget_01152022
e.g. SPARCBC_Application_01182022

Application Process

Please list any co-applicants on the grant application form, if applicable. In the *Administering Organization* section, applicants should list their organization, as well as the organization signatory who will authorize the grant. For example, an organization's signatory could be a CEO, CFO, Chief and Council or Executive Director.

For questions related to the grant application process, please contact the Project Coordinator, Noelle Saemerow (Noelle.Saemerow@fraserhealth.ca). Discussing your program proposal idea will assist you in determining whether your application is eligible and can help you define and refine key elements of your application.

Please send completed applications by **4:00 PM on February 28, 2022** via email to Noelle Saemerow at Noelle.Saemerow@fraserhealth.ca.

Successful applicants will be notified in **early 2022**. Project activities and program expenditures must be completed by **March 31, 2023**. Please consider these timelines when preparing your application.

Contact Information

Noelle Saemerow

Project Coordinator, Connect to Care Grant Program
Aboriginal Health, Fraser Health
Noelle.Saemerow@fraserhealth.ca

Lorraine Copas

Executive Director
Social Planning and Research Council of BC
lcopas@sparc.bc.ca

Vishal Jain

Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Aboriginal Health, Fraser Health
Vishal.Jain@fraserhealth.ca