

Section	Policy
50	52.10

Section Title: Prevention and Partnerships
Subject: Research and Workplace Innovation Program
Effective Date: February 1, 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) is dedicated to the promotion of safe and healthy workplaces and the recovery and return-to-work of injured workers. *The Workers Compensation Act (The Act)* enables the WCB to undertake research and safety programs on injury prevention, safety in the workplace, treatment of workplace injuries, and scientific, medical, or other issues relating to workers compensation. Accordingly, the WCB has established the Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP) to offer grants on an annual, competitive basis to support research, workplace innovation and training and education projects in the pursuit of these goals.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the WCB's approach to funding RWIP and to describe the program's mandate, qualifying criteria, and terms and conditions of funding. The policy also outlines the role of the Board of Directors and the Administration with respect to the governance and management of the program.

A. POLICY

I. PROGRAM MANDATE

The RWIP will support and fund:

- High quality scientific research that will contribute to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses and a reduction in impacts of workplace injuries and illnesses.
- The development, implementation and evaluation of innovative, practical, shop-floor solutions to improving workplace health and safety and fostering successful rehabilitation and productive return-to-work of injured or ill workers.
- Training and education projects that are relevant to workplace safety and health, injury and illness prevention, safe return-to-work and treatment of occupational illness.
- The effective Knowledge Transfer and Exchange (KTE) of a project. "KTE" refers to the engagement of stakeholders, decision-makers and knowledge users over the life of a project so that outcomes are translated into practical applications for prevention, rehabilitation and return-to-work.

The WCB will give priority to projects that:

- a) Address the priorities identified under the Scientific Research funding stream in the RWIP annual Call for Applications;
- b) Identify problems and issues frequently encountered among workers and in workplaces;
- c) Demonstrate the support of key stakeholders such as labour, industry

- associations or industry-based safety programs and other workplace partners where appropriate;
- d) Have practical and concrete outcomes;
 - e) Are concerned with topics and issues that have resulted in a significant number of WCB claims and have had an impact on a significant number of workers; and
 - f) Do not duplicate existing programs or services offered by other organizations.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

a. Scientific Research Stream

Eligibility for Funding

Qualified researchers, scholars and health professionals will be eligible for funding under this stream. Researchers must be affiliated with:

- Canadian post-secondary institutions including hospitals and research institutes,
- Canadian non-governmental organizations with an explicit research or knowledge translation mandate, or
- Organizations representing Manitoba workers or employers, including labour unions or organizations, industry or employer associations, and industry-based safety programs..

Objectives of Research Funding

The objectives of this funding stream are to support high quality scientific and applied research with practical benefits that:

- Develops a stronger understanding and furthers current knowledge of workplace injuries, illness, and disease;
- Identifies, prevents, treats or supports recovery from workplace injuries, illness and disease;
- Explores risk factors associated with specific industries, occupations, technology, work processes or other factors that may give rise to workplace injuries or illness;
- Expands Manitoba's research capacity in occupational health and safety and issues related to workers compensation; or
- Furthers understanding of issues of particular concern to the WCB and its stakeholders.

Selection Criteria for Research Applications

Research applications will be assessed and selected on their merit, relevance to the research priorities identified under the Scientific Research category in the annual Call for Applications, objectives of the program, and the qualifications of the research team.

Contents of the research proposal must conform to the requirements of the Call for Applications.

Research applications must include provision for KTE.

Research applications must abide by applicable ethical standards and undergo review by an institutional ethics board, if appropriate.

Research being conducted in Manitoba may be given precedence.

Budget will also be a criterion in selection. Applicants must demonstrate that the WCB grant and any financing from other sources will provide adequate financial support to achieve the objectives of the proposal. Applications may include reasonable administrative costs, but should not include blanket surcharges for institutional overhead.

Researchers who have defaulted on a previous WCB grant will not be eligible for funding.

Notice of Intent

Within the timeframe stated in the Call for Applications, applicants under the Scientific Research stream are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply for funding. The (NOI) must contain a brief description of the research undertaking, information on the principal applicant and the organization with which the principal applicant is affiliated. The NOI will be used to identify potential peer reviewers.

Peer Review

Those research applications that are selected by the WCB will undergo peer review. The peer review will at a minimum include the following dimensions:

- Scientific merit and quality of the proposed research;
- Originality;
- Methodology;
- Feasibility;
- Qualifications of the principal applicant and his or her team;
- Budget;
- Provision for KTE; and
- Likelihood of successful outcomes.

Peer reviewers will be required to sign a pledge of confidentiality and will be expected to disclose any potential conflicts of interest with the research proposal under review.

b. Workplace Innovation Stream

Eligibility for Funding

Manitoba employers, industry associations, safety groups, unions, labour organizations, industry-based safety programs, researchers or consultants working with employers or workers may apply for funding under this stream.

Objectives of Workplace Innovation Funding

The objectives of this funding stream are to support and fund projects which:

- Provide direct benefits to the occupational health and safety of a specific workplace or workplaces, including injury prevention and safe return-to-work;
- Develop, implement and evaluate innovative, practical, shop-floor solutions to improving workplace health and safety and fostering successful rehabilitation and productive return-to-work of injured or ill workers;
- Apply new information and technology to address occupational safety and health issues;
- Use existing knowledge in new ways to solve problems in occupational safety and health; or,

- Transfer new knowledge to the workplace through the development or provision of education and training materials or programs in workers compensation issues or occupational safety and health.

Selection Criteria for Workplace Innovation Projects

Projects will be assessed on their merit, relevance to the objectives of the program, and the ability of the project team to complete the project. Contents of the proposal must conform to the requirements of the Call for Applications.

The applicant must demonstrate that the project is novel and innovative and objectives cannot reasonably be met through existing mechanisms in the workplace or industry.

Projects must include provision for KTE.

The support of all workplace parties is critical to a project's success. Accordingly, projects must have demonstrated support from all relevant workplace parties to be considered.

Budget will also be a criterion in selection. Applicants must demonstrate that the WCB grant and/or any financing from other sources will provide adequate financial support to achieve the objectives of the proposal. Applications may include reasonable administrative costs, but should not include blanket surcharges for institutional overhead. Projects which include in-kind or monetary investment by the applicant organization may be given preference.

Projects must be conducted in Manitoba. Projects must be strongly relevant to workers, employers and industry sectors.

Projects that involve activities to improve occupational health and safety of a workplace in compliance with *The Workplace Safety and Health Act* may be considered for funding. Project funding may be provided to meet in part, the cost of legislative requirements of employers under *The Workplace Safety and Health Act*.

Applicants who have defaulted on a previous WCB grant will not be eligible for funding.

c. Training and Education Stream

Eligibility for Funding

To be eligible for funding under this stream, applicants must be engaged in occupational health and safety in Manitoba and demonstrate knowledge, expertise and proficiency in the development and delivery of education and training projects. Eligible projects will support the training priorities identified below. Applicants under this funding stream may include qualified educators, trainers, health and safety professionals, healthcare professionals, labour organizations, unions, employers, employer associations, industry-based safety programs, safety groups, industry associations and research organizations.

Objectives of Training and Education Funding

Consistent with *Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention* the objectives of this funding stream are to support and fund projects that:

- Develop or expand capacity for training that will benefit Manitoba workplaces, industry sectors or occupational groups;
- Address gaps in the delivery of training and education;
- Promote cultural and language sensitive training to immigrant workers and workers at risk;
- Improve training in workplace risk assessment and hazard identification related to health and safety, injury prevention and safe return to work;

Apply new information, technology, work processes or other factors to address injury prevention, safe return to work and occupational illness.

Selection Criteria for Training and Education Projects

Projects will be assessed on their merit and relevance to the objectives of the program, demonstrated knowledge, expertise and proficiency of the applicants to develop and deliver training and educational projects and the ability to complete the work.

Budget will also be a criterion in selection. Applicants must demonstrate that the WCB grant and/or any financing from other sources will provide sufficient financial support to achieve the objectives of the proposal. Applications may include reasonable administrative costs, but should not include blanket surcharges for institutional overhead. Projects which include in-kind or monetary investment by the applicant organization may be given preference.

Projects must include provision for KTE.

d. Other Program Initiatives

The Act enables the WCB to undertake research and other initiatives on scientific, medical or other issues relating to workers compensation, injury prevention and treatment of workplace injuries that promote safe and healthy workplaces and the recovery and return to work of injured workers. These initiatives are not limited to the core funding streams described in Section II, "a", "b" and "c" above but would also include the initiatives described below.

Requests for Proposals

At any time, the WCB may issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to undertake research and other initiatives on scientific, medical or other issues relating to workers compensation, injury prevention and treatment of workplace injuries that promote safe and healthy workplaces and the recovery and return to work of injured workers. The WCB will identify a specific initiative or research topic when calling for an RFP. The decision to issue an RFP will be based on needs and budget availability.

Partnerships

In order to pursue shared priorities, issues and goals, the WCB may partner with other workers compensation authorities, research agencies or third parties to undertake research or projects related to workers compensation issues. Partnerships may involve either sharing of costs, in-kind support or both.

Special Funding

The RWIP may support other initiatives that are within the mandate of this Policy. To facilitate the selection and evaluation of these initiatives, and to maintain the integrity of the Program, terms and conditions for such initiatives will be laid out by the Board of Directors.

III. PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

a. Role of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has oversight of the RWIP including the following duties, which it may delegate to a subcommittee:

- Determine the amount of funding that will be allocated to the RWIP through the WCB's annual budgetary process;
- Approve, amend or reject the research priorities proposed by the Administration under the Scientific Research funding stream in the annual Call for Applications;
- Approve, amend or reject the recommendations submitted by the Administration for awarding project funding;
- Approve, amend or reject recommendations submitted by the Administration for termination of grants;
- Ensure that unspent/uncommitted funds from the RWIP annual funding amount and any funds not required to complete a project are accounted for through a segregated accounting information/reporting mechanism;
- Direct the use of any unspent/uncommitted funds (unless otherwise provided under Part III. c., *Additional Funding*) and ensure that spending is within the mandate of the RWIP; and
- Ensure that the appropriate administrative controls are in place to ensure the integrity of the Program.

b. Role of the Administration

The WCB's Administration will administer and manage the RWIP. Included in this role are the following responsibilities:

- Recommend to the Board of Directors research priorities to be included under the Scientific Research funding stream in the annual Call for Applications;
- Issue the annual Call for Applications;
- Conduct a preliminary review of all Scientific Research NOIs and, where the NOI is unlikely to lead to high-quality research on a topic that is within the WCB's overall mandate, advise the applicant not to submit a full proposal based on the NOI.
- Conduct a preliminary review of all applications in each of the funding streams and select those that will be forwarded for further funding consideration.
- Arrange for the peer review of Scientific Research applications selected for further consideration;
- Review, evaluate and recommend to the Board of Directors the applications for program funding each year;
- Develop the funding agreement for each grant recipient;

- Monitor and report as necessary to the Board of Directors on the progress and termination of grants;
- Ensure compliance with the funding agreements and use of funds by grant recipients;
- Keep a record of unspent/uncommitted funds from the RWIP annual funding amount and any funds not required to complete a project by utilizing a segregated accounting information/reporting mechanism;
- Report regularly to the Board of Directors on the status of unspent/uncommitted funds.
- Ensure that these funds are used exclusively for grants approved under the mandate and objectives of the RWIP;
- Provide guidance to grant recipients when needed;
- Facilitate the release of WCB data to grant recipients as permitted by law and WCB policy; and
- Approve additional project funding for amounts below the thresholds set out under Part III. c., *Additional Funding*).

c. Program Administration

General Funding Criteria

In order to be considered for funding under this program, all projects should:

- Be highly relevant to Manitoba workers and employers.
- Not significantly duplicate or overlap with other projects, programs or studies; and
- Be time limited, generally up to a maximum of two years in duration. Projects should not exceed \$100,000 for each year of the project. The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, based on the merits and requirements of the project, choose to fund projects which are for longer duration, or higher requested funding;
- Funding may be considered for projects where the purchase or lease of equipment, technology or software licenses is required to improve the occupational health and safety of a workplace. The amount of funding should not exceed 10 percent of the project funding approved by the WCB. The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, based on the merits and requirements of the project, choose to fund projects which include a larger proportion of funding for these items.

Additional Funding

The WCB will consider and approve additional funding to an approved project's budget when it is reasonable to do so, and when doing so will not exceed the funds available in the segregated unspent/uncommitted fund. Additional funding may include the following purposes:

- To meet cost overruns not anticipated at the time of the application;
- To enhance dissemination of project results; or
- To ensure a project is completed.

A request for additional funding will be referred to the Board of Directors when:

- The additional funding requested exceeds \$20,000; or
- The combined total of the additional funding requested and the original grant exceeds \$200,000.

Additional funding will be reported to the Board of Directors through the RWIP's Administration Report.

Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a formal funding agreement with the WCB. The funding agreement will set out the terms and conditions of funding including the maximum amount of the grant, duration, expenditure controls, reporting requirements and deliverables. The funding agreement will be jointly signed by the principal applicant and the program director.

Extending the Period of the Funding Agreement

The WCB may consider extending the period of the funding agreement when there are extenuating circumstances.

Budget Reallocations and Carry-over of Grant Funds

The funds awarded to each grant recipient are for use exclusively against expenditure items specified in the funding agreement. Some flexibility may be permitted for reallocation from one budget category to another within the approved budget. The movement of expenditure items within an approved budget will require prior authorization by the WCB.

Acknowledgement of WCB

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the financial support provided by the WCB under the RWIP in any publication, presentation, press release or any other public mention. Grant recipients should provide the WCB prior notice of any such public mention of the project.

Intellectual Property

Though the grant recipient retains intellectual property rights to the outcome of the projects, the WCB retains the right to use all material gathered or produced as a consequence of grant support in any manner it considers useful without further payment beyond the grant support.

Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

Any disclosure of information by the WCB to support a project is subject to WCB policies on the disclosure of WCB data, file information, and the applicable confidentiality and disclosure provisions under *The Workers Compensation Act*, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and *The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)*.

Termination of Grant

The WCB may terminate a grant, in its discretion, where:

- The grant recipient fails to meet the obligations set out in the funding agreement;
- There is evidence of misuse of grant monies; or
- The grant recipient is no longer able to complete the research proposal or project, to the WCB's satisfaction.

In cases where the termination results in the need for recovery of funds from the grant recipient, the WCB will use available collection procedures to recoup outstanding monies and pursue legal proceedings against the recipient if warranted.

Program Review

The Administration will review all aspects of this program every five years beginning in 2017.

B. REFERENCES

The Workers Compensation Act, sections 97.1(1), 97.1(2), and 101(1)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, sections 42, 43, 44(1), 46, 47

The Personal Health Information Act, sections 3, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 59

Policy 21.50.10, *Disclosure of File Information*

Policy 21.50.50, *Release of Statistical Data*

History:

1. Policy on Research and Development originated by Board Order 164/89, effective January 1, 1990.
2. Policy 52.10 replaced by Board Order 14/97 on September 30, 1997, effective for all proposal requests on or after October 1, 1997. Former policy amended to reflect that it ceases effect on September 30, 1997 and re-numbered 52.10.01.
3. Policy amended on February 20, 1998, by Board Order 1/98 to reflect that the annual process and requests for funding will be approved by the Board of Directors.
4. Policy amended on April 29, 1999, by Board Order 16/99 to reflect a change in the name of the committee responsible for approving grants funding requests.
5. Amendments made to the Administrative Guidelines effective May 31, 2001.
6. Policy amended on October 30, 2001, by Board Order 26/01 to allow, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, for the funding of projects for terms exceeding 5 years.
7. An amendment to Section A, Item 10 "Exit Clause," was approved by the Board of Directors on February 28, 2002, by Board Order 08/02.
8. Policy amended on January 31, 2006, by Board Order 02/06 to include changes in the administration of the Community Initiatives and Research Program.
9. New Policy 52.10, *Research and Workplace Innovation Program*, was approved by Board Order 32/08 on September 25, 2008, effective January 1, 2009. This policy will replace existing Policy 52.10, *Community Initiatives and Research Program*, which ceases effect on December 31, 2008, and be reissued as Policy 52.10.01. Policy 52.10.01 will apply to all projects approved before December 31, 2008.
10. Policy amended on January 27, 2011, by Board Order No. 03/11, effective January 1, 2011. Changes include deleting the reference in the policy to the "Grants Reserve Fund". The Policy now states that unspent/uncommitted funds will be accounted for utilizing a segregated accounting information/reporting mechanism and that the Administration will report regularly to the Board of Directors on the status of unspent/uncommitted funds.
11. Minor formatting and grammatical changes were made to the policy June 27, 2012.
12. Policy was amended on December 19, 2013 by Board Order No. 35/13, effective January 1, 2014, to include a third stream of funding for training and education projects, to clarify eligibility criteria, to allow for capital funding up to certain limits, to allow RWIP management

to approve additional funding up to certain limits and to require a review of the mandate and objectives every five years.

13. Policy amended by Board Order No. 45/14 on December 18, 2014 effective January 1, 2015, to change the level of additional project funding for which Board of Directors approval is required.
14. Policy amended by Board Order No. 05/16 on January 28, 2016, effective February 1, 2016, to specify that the Administration may propose topics on which Scientific Research proposals are welcome and that the Board of Directors may approve, amend or reject the proposed topics, in order to provide applicants with guidance. Revisions also give administration the discretion to advise an applicant, based on the quality or subject matter of an NOI, that a full application should not be forwarded, in order to reduce time and effort by applicants as well as resources reviewing the proposals.