

In-Kind Contributions:

A Toolkit for Island Health Researchers



This toolkit defines in-kind contributions in research grant applications.

It summarizes eligible in-kind contributions, outlines how to value them and obtain approval from the contributing partner or department, and provides resources and tools to help meet reporting requirements to external granting agencies.

What is an in-kind contribution?

A granting agency may require in-kind contributions to demonstrate the organization's commitment to the proposed project. These contributions may be part of the overall budget.

In-kind contributions are resources essential to the research or research-related activities of a project or a proposal that can be given a cash value. In-kind contributions could be in the form of cash-equivalent goods or services, which, *if not contributed, would have to be purchased with grant funds*. Examples of an in-kind contribution may include:

- ✓ Access to unique databases or information
- ✓ Professional, analytical, and other donated services
- ✓ Employee salaries (including benefits) for time allocated to the project
- ✓ Equipment (donated, loaned) and software
- ✓ Study materials, technologies, or components
- ✓ Patents and licenses for use (e.g. a validated quality-of-life survey)
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Use of facilities required to conduct the research (e.g. lab)
- ✓ Partner organization time spent participating in the project
- ✓ Eligible infrastructure items

Usually, the following costs are NOT considered eligible in-kind contributions:

- ✗ Internal and routine (operating) costs that would be incurred whether or not a study is conducted
- ✗ The cost of a medication or product under study
- ✗ Patenting, legal fees, or consultant rates
- ✗ Professional memberships or subscriptions
- ✗ Administration and research support services
- ✗ Indirect costs of the research project



The above costs are examples only. Please confirm the definition and eligibility of in-kind contributions with individual granting agencies, funders, or other partners.

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When would I need to include in-kind in an application?

- **When required by the grant competition:** Some funding opportunities require in-kind or cash-equivalent contributions up to a certain percentage of the total budget; for example, a funder may require 50% of the overall budget to come from a combination of matched partner funding and in-kind contributions.
- **When required to demonstrate feasibility:** Even if not required, showing that you have in-kind goods and services will demonstrate that the project is feasible, sustainable, and supported by your institution and/or your collaborators, especially if the amount you're applying for isn't sufficient to carry out the proposed project.

How do I value and confirm in-kind contributions?

Most granting agencies provide guidelines on valuing in-kind contributions; check with the agency administrator. Funding agencies generally accept internal costs and fair market value as the eligible in-kind value.

In addition to including in-kind contributions in your budget and justification, funding agencies may require **letters of support** or a letter confirming the value of the contribution from any participating departments or partner organizations. Whether the funding agency *requires* a letter of support or not, letters generally strengthen an application. They can also formalize a contributing partner's commitment prior to receiving the award.



Island Health employees and affiliates are required to complete a [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) prior to submitting any external grant applications. [This form](#) helps the Research Department work with you to identify and value in-kind contributions before you submit your application.



CAUTION: If your application is successful, any in-kind contributions in your budget are considered **committed resources** and **must be upheld**—so **prior authorization** from Island Health or other partners is **essential** before you submit your application!

How do I operationalize in-kind contributions?

For successful applications, service agreements or contracts with contributing partners (outside of Island Health) are required to outline their obligations to the project, timeline commitments, and reporting requirements.

Keep in-kind partners closely engaged, as situations may change from the time of the grant application to the time that the in-kind is required; for example, the person who authorized the in-kind contribution may no longer be in the same role. Ongoing communication will ensure that the in-kind commitment stays on the radar. In addition, in-kind commitments may span more than one fiscal year; this must be taken into consideration for departmental budget impacts.

How do I report on in-kind contributions?

If you receive a grant that includes in-kind contributions, you may be required to provide auditable tracking of in-kind contributions and/or financial reporting to the granting agency. Check with them to see whether they have any preferred reporting forms.



It's not just the granting agency that wants to know how the project is going; report back to your partners (both internal and external), too! Keep them informed with updates or delays that show the impact of their commitment and contributions.

Resources

- **Templates & Samples**
 - Budget Templates, Reporting Templates, and Sample Service Agreements are available on request to research@islandhealth.ca
- **External Funding In-Kind References**
 - [CIHR in kind eligibility](#)
 - [Guidelines for Cash and In Kind Contributions SSHRC](#)
- **Resources within Island Health**
 - Learn who needs to sign off on your in-kind contribution at Island Health. Island Health's Finance Policy 4.4.3 outlines signing and spending authority, including categories and amounts matrix.
 - Research Grant Facilitator: Annie Moore (isabel.moore@islandhealth.ca)
 - For support in setting up service agreements, contact Dawn Waterhouse, Research Business Manager (Dawn.Waterhouse@islandhealth.ca)