



Canadian Institutes
of Health Research

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Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

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Institute of Cancer Research

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locomoteur et de l'arthrite

Institut des neurosciences,
de la santé mentale et des
toxicomanies

Institut de la nutrition,
du métabolisme et du diabète

Institut de la santé publique
et des populations

June 23, 2025

Our file: A-2024-0034



By Email

Dear [REDACTED]:

This letter is in response to your requests dated February 17, 2025, to obtain the following:

“The ScienceUpFirst initiative was cofounded in 2020 by law professor Timothy Caulfield and Senator Stan Kutcher. In 2022, CIHR awarded Timothy Caulfield and Marianne Mader \$1.5 Million for a 1-year project entitled “ScienceUpFirst” under program competition “Operating Grant: Science Up First.” The following year, 2023, they were awarded an additional \$1.5 Million for a 1-year project under program competition “Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation.” In 2020, Timothy Caulfield was awarded \$305,366 for a 2-year project titled: “Coronavirus Outbreak: Mapping and Countering Misinformation.”

Provide all documents and communications in the awarding of all these funds addressing the following issues, from January 1, 2020 to February 17, 2025:

- Was there an open competition for each of these projects?
- If so, how were these competitions announced and what was the timeline from the announcement to the awarding of the funds?
- How many applications were received for each of these grants?
- What was the criteria used to select the winner?
- How did CIHR or other associated agency determine, or what considerations went into the determination of, the amount of funds needed for each project?
- What were the deliverables and how did the agencies assess value for money?
- What was the breakdown of costs and deliverables?

- How were the deliverables used by the government? For example, did the project(s) identify potential sources of misinformation? If so, did the government act on, or does the government plan to act on, that information? What specific actions were taken, or plan to be taken, with the information?
- How did the agencies evaluate the expertise of the applicants?
- What was the process for evaluating potential conflicts of interest of the successful applicant?
- Did CIHR consider there to be a possible conflict of interest in awarding such large sums of money to a newly established organization cofounded by a senator?
- How was the determination made of what constitutes "misinformation" for these projects?
- Was there a process in place for the public to provide feedback or participate in the exchange of information?"

I am pleased to enclose the releasable documents relevant to your requests, which are disclosed under the authority of the *Access to Information Act*. You will note that certain records or portions thereof have been withheld under the following section of the Act: s. 19(1) – Personal information, s. 20(1)(b) – Financial, Commercial, Scientific or Technical Information, s. 21(1)(a) – Advice or recommendations, and s. 21(1)(b) – Consultations or deliberations. For ease of reference, a copy of the Act is available at [Justice Laws Website](#).

You are entitled to complain to the [Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada](#) about this letter and/or if you did not receive from us (within 30 days of making your request) either the response to your requests or a notice that we are extending the time we have to respond. You have 60 days to submit your complaint, starting from the day after you receive this letter or become aware that you have grounds to complain.

Complaints can be submitted through the website of the [Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada](#), or by mail, addressed to:

The Information Commissioner of Canada
30 Victoria Street, 7th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 1H3

Telephone: (613) 995-2410 (National Capital Region)
1-800-267-0441 (Toll-free)

You may obtain additional information on the complaint process by visiting the website of the Office of the Information Commissioner at www.oic-ci.gc.ca.

This completes our processing of your requests. If you have any questions concerning your requests, please contact us at ATIP-AIPRP@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SRobertson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sharon Robertson
Manager, Access to Information and Privacy



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Routing Slip

This routing slip is to be included with your signature pages and is for CIHR's administrative use only.

Funding Opportunity

Operating Grant: Canadian 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Rapid Research Funding Opportunity 2020-02-18

ResearchNet ID

Applicant

Surname

Caulfield

Given Names

Timothy

PIN

Title

Coronavirus Outbreak: Mapping and Countering Misinformation

Relevant Research Area:

Title of Priority Announcement/Funding Pools:

Linked Programs:



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Caulfield, Timothy
University of Alberta

Participants Signatures

The participants are in the following order when applicable: Principal Knowledge User, Knowledge Users, Principal Applicant and Co-Applicants, Primary Supervisor and Supervisors.

It is agreed that the general conditions governing grants and awards, as well as the role-specific responsibilities detailed in the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2), apply to any grant or award made pursuant to this application and hereby accepted by the participant(s).

For those assuming the role of CIHR reviewer in other funding competitions, information supplied in this application (including CV information) may be used for the purpose of informing the validation process of applications to reviewers. Accordingly, information from your application may be made available to CIHR Competition Chairs and Scientific Officers.

Supervisor(s) Signatures (If applicable)

It is agreed that the general conditions governing grants and awards, as well as the role-specific responsibilities detailed in the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2), apply to any grant or award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the applicant's supervisor(s).

The author(s) of the Summary of the Research Project included in the candidate's application also agree that it accurately describes the training program proposed.

Consent to Disclosure of Personal Information

I understand that maintaining public trust in the integrity of researchers is fundamental to building a knowledge-based society. By submitting this application or by accepting funding from CIHR, NSERC and/or SSHRC, I affirm that I have read and I agree to respect all the policies of these Agencies that are relevant to my research, including the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research* (<http://www.rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/framework-cadre/>).

In cases of a serious breach of agency policy, the agency may publicly disclose any information relevant to the breach that is in the public interest, including my name, the nature of the breach, the institution where I was employed at the time of the breach, the institution where I am currently employed, and the recourse imposed against me.

I accept this as a condition of applying for or receiving Agency funding and I consent to such disclosure.

Surname Pennycook	Given Names Gordon	Role Co-Applicant	Signature X
Institution University of Regina (Saskatchewan)	Faculty	Department	Date Feb. 18, 2020
Surname Peters	Given Names Cheryl	Role Co-Applicant	Signature X
Institution University of Calgary	Faculty	Department	Date Feb. 18, 2020
Surname Rachul	Given Names Christen	Role Co-Applicant	Signature X
Institution University of Manitoba	Faculty	Department	Date Feb. 18, 2020



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Caulfield, Timothy
University of Alberta

Signature of Institution Paid

Institution Paid Signature	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the role-specific responsibilities detailed in the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2), apply to any grant or award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the applicant's institution, or the applicant(s) employing institution(s).</p> <p>A signature is not required at institutions outside of Canada.</p> <p>If both your Program and submitting institution are using the Electronic Approval Tool on ResearchNet, a signature is not required for block 1 if the Authorized Official can bind the institution to all applicable obligations outlined the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2). If the Authorized Official cannot bind the institution to all applicable obligations, complete block 2.</p>	
1. Signature of Authorized Official: University of Alberta	
Print Name:	LAN CHAN-MARPLES RESEARCH FACILITATOR RESEARCH SERVICES OFFICE University of Alberta
Date:	Feb 18, 2020
Signature:	
X	
2. If the Authorized Official above cannot bind the institution to all applicable obligations outlined in the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2), please provide additional signatures below as required.	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature:	
X	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature:	
X	

Signature of Research Institution

Institution Signature at Primary Location of Research (Awards Programs Only)	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the role-specific responsibilities detailed in the CIHR Application Administration Guide (part 2), apply to any award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the Nominated Principal Applicant's Institution where the research is to be conducted.</p>	
Signature of Authorized Official:	
University of Alberta	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature:	
X	



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s.19(1)

s.20(1)(b)

**PROTECTED WHEN
COMPLETED**

Appl. #

Application Details

Funding Opportunity:

Operating Grant: Canadian 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Rapid Research Funding Opportunity (2020-02-18)

Applicant:

Surname

Caulfield

Given Names

Timothy

Participant Type

Institution

University of Alberta

Faculty

Faculty of Law

Department

Telephone

780-492-8358

Fax

E-mail

caulfield@ualberta.ca

Title:

Coronavirus Outbreak: Mapping and Countering Misinformation

Primary location where research to be conducted: University of Alberta

Faculty: Faculty of Law

Department:

Institution which will administer project funds (Institution Paid):

University of Alberta

Budget:

Total Requested Amount:

Caulfield, Timothy



Certification Requirements

- ☒ Human subjects ☐ Human stem cells ☐ Animals ☐ Biohazards
☐ Environmental Impact ☐ Containment Level

☐ Clinical Trial

☐ Contains a randomized trial

☐ In order to carry out the proposed research in this application, an exemption from Health Canada under Section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act is required. I agree to obtain an exemption from Health Canada to use the controlled substance for research purposes, as needed.

Other Project Information

For statistical purposes, does this application propose research involving Indigenous peoples? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Is sex as a biological variable taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Is gender as a socio-cultural factor taken into account in the research design, methods, analysis and interpretation, and/or dissemination of findings? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Please describe how sex and/or gender considerations will be integrated into your research proposal or explain why sex and/or gender are not applicable to your research proposal:

In exploring the population demographics and their interaction with fake news, the team will explore the potential role gender might play. Specifically, they will explore whether gender plays a role in believing and sharing false information about the coronavirus. Additionally, when assessing the coronavirus portrayals in the media, they will determine whether the framing of gender has a role to play, for example, in situations when individual cases of infection are detailed.



Other Applicants

Surname
Pennycook

Given Names
Gordon

Role
Co-Applicant

Participant Type

Institution
University of Regina (Saskatchewan)

Department

Faculty

Surname
Peters

Given Names
Cheryl

Role
Co-Applicant

Participant Type

Institution
University of Calgary

Department

Faculty

Surname
Rachul

Given Names
Christen

Role
Co-Applicant

Participant Type

Institution
University of Manitoba

Department

Faculty



Other Applicants





Descriptors *

coronavirus , misinformation , public representations , news media/social media , stigma/fear, public perceptions , public health, policy response , communication/public engagement strategies , policy recommendations

Areas of Research *

Primary

HEALTH RESEARCH

Secondary

POPULATION HEALTH

Classification Codes *

Primary

HEALTH POLICY

Secondary

HEALTH PROMOTION

Themes *

1. Social/Cultural/Environmental/Population Health

Suggested Institutes *

1. Population and Public Health

2. 

3. 

Caulfield, Timothy

Appl. # / Numéro de la demande : [REDACTED]

Operating Grant: Canadian 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Rapid Research Funding Opportunity/Subv. de fonctionnement: PF canadienne pour une intervention de recherche rapide contre la maladie à coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Application/Demande 2020-02-18

Summary of Research Proposal/Résumé de la proposition de recherche

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has already led to the dissemination of misinformation about the cause, the scope and treatment of the disease. The spread of health misinformation and disinformation is a serious threat to public health. In an increasingly online and networked society, accessing accurate information and avoiding misinformation is increasingly challenging. Addressing the spread of misinformation is a key component in the response to COVID-19. We propose research into COVID-19 misinformation that will provide evidence-informed communication and education tools, and policy recommendations to use in dealing with COVID-19 and future outbreaks.

Our interdisciplinary team at the University of Alberta's Health Law Institute, led by Canada Research Chair Timothy Caulfield, has been studying health and science misinformation for over 20 years. In collaboration with Christen Rachul (University of Manitoba), Gordon Pennycook (University of Regina) and Cheryl Peters (University of Calgary), we propose a research project studying COVID-19 misinformation. The overarching objectives are to better understand the content, loci, frequency and scope of COVID-19 misinformation, how this misinformation impacts individuals, and the social strategies and policy responses that could make a positive impact.

First, we will conduct empirical content analyses of traditional media, social media and search engine results. Second, we will undertake empirical psychological research on the way in which individuals respond to health information relating to COVID-19, testing for differential impacts. These projects will shed light on the nature of the coronavirus misinformation phenomenon by first precisely describing its content and pervasiveness, then by understanding how the public interacts with this information and what actions might be taken to curb social contagion. Third, our project will develop policy recommendations, regulatory responses, as well as communication and public engagement discourse and strategies to counter misinformation.

The impacts of our approach will be significant. They align with the call's research areas, as we will leverage our findings to develop strategies to combat misinformation, stigma, and fear, to address their underlying drivers, and to improve public awareness, knowledge, and trust during the outbreak response. Through doing so, we will meet the call's objectives of contributing to the global response to the COVID-19 outbreak, strengthening the understanding of its public impacts, and providing evidence to inform public health planning, decision making and response. The team will identify the ways in which COVID-19 information is distorted, intentionally falsified and otherwise manipulated. We will generate evidence-informed policy recommendations, regulatory responses, and other practical communication tools to counter and correct misinformation. Outputs will include multiple academic publications, presentations, science communication tools (including art & graphics), social media dissemination, opinion editorials, engagement with public and private institutions, and a knowledge dissemination workshop. The research team's extensive expertise and networks will facilitate the distribution of outputs, including to health care practitioners, public health institutions, government regulators, popular media entities, and members of the public.



Appl. #

Lay Title and Lay Abstract

Lay Title:

Coronavirus Outbreak: Mapping and Countering Misinformation

Lay Abstract:

The spread of health misinformation and disinformation are a serious threat to public health, including in the case of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Addressing the spread of COVID-19 misinformation involves identifying the misinformation in circulation, understanding the public impact, and designing and implementing evidence-based solutions to combat the harmful discourse. We propose conducting research into COVID-19 misinformation from multiple angles, developing effective communication and education tools, countering misinformation strategically, and providing policy recommendations to deal with COVID-19 and future outbreaks. Our interdisciplinary team of experts is led by Timothy Caulfield, Canada Research Chair and Health Law Institute Research Director, who has been studying health and science misinformation for over 20 years. Our team will conduct systematic content analyses of traditional and online social media and empirical psychological research on how individuals respond to COVID-19 information. The objective is to assemble and execute a depth-of-analysis sufficient to enact positive outcomes for COVID-19 while establishing a blueprint for future misinformation events. The impact of this course of research will be significant, enabling the development of strategies to combat misinformation, stigma, and fear, to address their underlying drivers, and to improve public awareness, knowledge, and trust. We will meet the call's objectives of contributing to the global response to the COVID-19 outbreak, strengthening the understanding of its public impacts, and providing evidence to inform public health planning, decision making and response. Deploying our expertise and networks will maximize outputs, including to those in health care, government, popular media, and the public at large.

I. Project Description

The spread of health misinformation and disinformation is a serious threat to public health in both national and international contexts.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Health misinformation can lead to distraction,⁸ financial loss, physical harm,⁹ system costs, public health harms (e.g. from vaccine hesitancy and anti-fluoride sentiment), and the erosion of critical thinking and trust in our health institutions. Because the media is rapidly changing – moving online and becoming more networked and social^{10,11} – the issues around accessing accurate information have become increasingly challenging.^{12,13,14,15,16}

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has already led to the dissemination of misinformation about the cause,^{17,18} the scope^{19,20} and treatment of the disease.²¹ There is also misinformation framing the relevant issues in an inaccurate and racist manner,^{22,23,24} as well as stoking fears which can negatively impact the public response.²⁵ Indeed, the rapid spread of misinformation has already become a hallmark of the COVID-19 public health crisis.²⁶ It was reported that 75% of the coronavirus news reports on social media are fake news²⁷ (i.e., ostensible “news” content that is fabricated but presented as if from a legitimate source²⁸), and the abundance of false information spreading across various social media platforms has caused significant challenges (e.g., the proliferation of fears that it is a government-made biological weapon).²⁹ Addressing the spread of misinformation and the issues arising therefrom is a key component in the response to this and future outbreaks as it will assist in combating stigma and fear.

The research team at the Health Law Institute (HLI), led by Canadian Research Chair, Timothy Caulfield, has been studying the issues concerning health and science misinformation for over 20 years. The HLI (in collaboration with Rachul, Pennycook and Peters) propose a research project focused on exploring misinformation regarding the coronavirus outbreak. The overarching objectives of this project are threefold. Each of these objectives are directed toward forming a better understanding of how information (and misinformation) about the coronavirus impacts individuals, with the goal of providing evidence to inform a coordinated public health and policy response.

First, we will engage in an empirical analysis, using methods we have successfully developed and implemented,^{30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39} to map the health-related misinformation and disinformation surrounding the coronavirus present in three domains: 1) the news media; 2) social media; and 3) search engine results. In addition to capturing the specific characteristics of misinformation (storylines, cures, fear-inducing facts, etc.), the objective of this empirical analysis will be to describe which specific sources or media platforms are spreading which sorts of misinformation. Further, the analysis will detail whether – and if so, the reasons why – particular rhetoric and narratives exist in the manner in which they do. Here, attention will be paid to whether population demographics are a factor, such as, for example, whether the framing of gender and/or “race” has a role to play in situations where individual cases of infection are detailed.

Second, we will leverage the above insights to inform a direct investigation of the potential impact of coronavirus misinformation on individuals and communities. Professor Gordon

Pennycook is one of the leading researchers in this field, and has produced an extensive amount of high-impact research regarding the spread of misinformation and the impacts it has on the public.^{27,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49} This research will focus on: 1) understanding who is most likely to believe and spread coronavirus misinformation; 2) determining the downstream consequences of misinformation exposure; and 3) testing interventions that decrease the sharing of coronavirus misinformation.

Third, informed by our empirical work and a comprehensive literature review, we will develop policy recommendations, regulatory responses, as well as communication and public engagement strategies.

The impacts of this three-pronged approach will be significant. They will provide the evidentiary foundation necessary to build strategies that pertain to the core goal of the funding opportunity: the development of “social and policy countermeasures in health: developing strategies to combat misinformation, stigma and fear.” We will generate evidence-informed policy recommendations, regulatory responses, and other practical, innovative actions (such as use of graphics, engaging imagery and fine arts) to counter and correct misinformation. The research team’s extensive networks will facilitate the dissemination of outputs, including to health care practitioners, public health institutions, government regulators, popular media entities, and members of the public. This work will have implications far beyond the scope of coronavirus, to other health phenomena at risk of rampant dissemination of misinformation.

II. Project Approach and Methods

i) Public (Mis)Representation: News, Social Media, and Search Results

We will map misinformation related to the coronavirus outbreak through an analysis of discourse in three domains - traditional news media, social media, and search engine results - beginning from the first reports of the coronavirus outbreak in December 2019. The analysis of traditional news media will focus on top news sources.⁵⁰ For the analysis of social media – where misinformation can flourish^{51,52,53} – we will focus on Twitter and YouTube. Twitter is a significant source of news dissemination and acquisition (current events, breaking news, etc.),^{10,54,55,56} and because it consists of various contributors (news outlets, individuals, businesses, bots, etc.) it is an ideal space to map out numerous sources and their potentially varied coronavirus messaging. YouTube has many uses including opinion dissemination and news acquisition,⁵⁷ and is the second most popular social media platform in North America (after Facebook).^{10,54} Finally, we will explore search engine results as Canadians are increasingly going online for news and health information,⁵⁸ using online search engines in addition to social media. As Google remains the most popular search engine in Canada,^{59,60} we will coordinate a series of Google searches (highlighting geographic differences, etc.), capturing and analyzing the discourse which receives the most traction. Within these three domains, we will map, *inter alia*, the primary misinformation themes, topics, and characteristics, the dominant misinformation voices (e.g., reliable sources vs. less-reliable sources), and the overall presence misinformation has in various domains.

The team will modify the methods used in its numerous completed analyses on the portrayals of health topics in popular media.^{30,31,32,34,35,36,37,37,38,39} Our team's mixed methods include inductive and deductive procedures⁶¹ that are informed by a grounded theory⁶² approach, whereby the phenomena being analyzed play a significant role in shaping the analytical procedures as opposed to using a broad, non-context specific analytical lens. Using this approach, we will develop a comprehensive account of misinformation related to the coronavirus that is grounded in data.

ii) Public Reaction

The analysis of discourse surrounding the coronavirus outbreak will allow us to identify the strongest ("most viral") specific examples of misinformation. We will also, for comparison purposes, obtain information that is of high quality and from legitimate sources (e.g., the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)). This will then be used to conduct empirical research on the way that individuals respond to health information relating to an outbreak. For this, we will adapt a paradigm developed by Pennycook and colleagues to investigate politically partisan fake news content.^{40,41,42,43} We will present study participants with representative health information. Crucially, we will systematically vary the quality and accuracy of the information to test for differential impacts.

There are three primary goals of this component of our research. First, we seek to understand who is most likely to believe and (separately) share false information about coronavirus. Past work has shown that people who tend to be more emotional⁶³ and intuitive^{40,42,49} are worse at discerning between true and false news content relative to people with information processing dispositions that are more careful and reflective. We will also investigate the roles of digital media literacy and basic science knowledge. Second, we will investigate the extent to which (and for whom) being exposed to health-related misinformation increases later false impressions. Past work has shown that a single prior exposure to a fake news headline increases later belief in the headline (e.g., one week later).⁴¹ However, it is unclear if exposure to misinformation increases false beliefs that are different from (but related to) the content of the misinformation. For example, some individuals may be more likely to adopt negative racial stereotypes when exposed to certain forms of coronavirus misinformation. Third, we will investigate potential interventions against the spread of health-related misinformation. Past work from our team has shown that people often share fake news on social media because they fail to even consider whether it is accurate – but, crucially, subtly nudging people to consider accuracy increases their ability to discern between true and false content.⁶⁴ We will test whether subtle reminders of accuracy are able to decrease people's willingness to share false information about the coronavirus (and, if so, for whom). Appropriate research ethics approval will be obtained for all studies.

iii) Policy Response

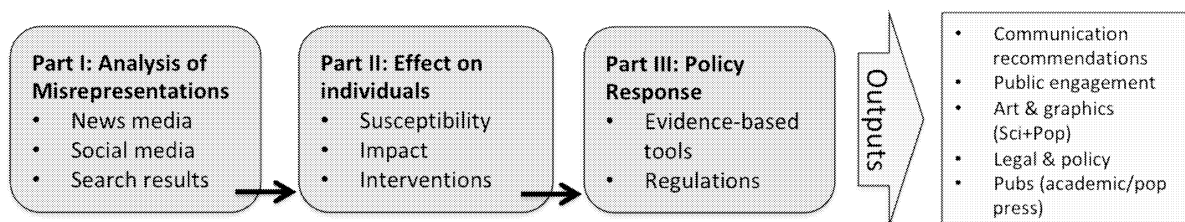
The two empirical approaches will inform development of targeted communication tools to counter the various forms of misinformation, be they concerning remedies, causes, or severity. There is a growing body of literature on how to respond to the spread of misinformation.^{43,63,65,66} For example, physicians are increasingly engaging in social media to help combat misinformation.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, many of the most intuitive and obvious

interventions may not be effective. For example, warning labels from fact-checkers (an initial tactic that Facebook used to combat misinformation) may increase belief in misinformation that is *not* warned about (since people believed non-warned headlines to be verified)⁴⁸ and increasing the salience of source information (so that people can identify whether the information comes from a trustworthy source) is ineffective because people judge accuracy primarily on the apparent plausibility of the headline.⁴⁵ The consequence of this is that policy responses – even common-sense ones – need to be vetted by empirical research, thus highlighting the need for an evidence-informed approach.

In addition to communication and public engagement strategies, we will also provide recommendations about legal and regulatory approaches to countering misinformation. Health Canada communications, truth in advertising law – via the Competition Bureau⁶⁸ and *Competition Act*⁶⁹ – as well as professional regulators’ policies are relevant to companies, governments and practitioners looking to profit from the spread of misinformation about coronavirus and how it can be treated. Regulations affecting the oversight activities of social media platforms & potential legal reforms increasing platforms’ obligations to control the spread of misinformation^{70,71} could also have large impacts. In addition, we will consider the legal and ethical tensions that are likely to emerge, such as balancing the constitutionally protected right of freedom of expression against the need to protect public health. The team will engage in both a review of relevant policy and the undertaking of empirical research using conceptual analysis and traditional methods of legal scholarship, including review of relevant legislation, case law & legal theory.

III. Key Outputs:

- 1) The development of multiple science communication tools including, for example, short lay language summaries, art-science integrations aimed at public education and engagement (“SCI+POP”). This will include working closely with collaborators from the Department of Art & Design, U of A (Professor Sean Caulfield) to create engaging (social media friendly) images & illustrations. The team will work with collaborators in an integrated knowledge translation framework⁷² to determine the most effective tools.
- 2) Multiple academic publications, academic conference presentations, policy recommendations, and regulatory responses.
- 3) Extensive dissemination of results via academic presentations, social media (Twitter where Caulfield has 52K followers and Instagram 5K), interviews for the popular press, and commentaries and editorials in key publications as permitted. These efforts will collectively serve to increase awareness regarding the presence and impact of coronavirus misinformation for both the general public and academics.
- 4) Engagement with government institutions, such as Health Canada, PHAC, provincial & municipal health agencies and the Competition Bureau, along with key private institutions such as Google and Facebook, with the results to encourage policy action based on recommendations.
- 5) A knowledge dissemination workshop hosted by the HLI on health misinformation and disinformation, within which the results of the primary research will be shared. Collaborators, key policymakers, experts, media and other stakeholders will be invited.



IV. Research Team: **Timothy Caulfield** is a CRC and a science and health policy expert with extensive experience exploring public representations of science and policy responses to the spread of misinformation. He has experience in both unique KT (e.g., best-selling books, social media presence, host/producer of docuseries) & policy development. **Cheryl Peters** is an epidemiologist and knowledge translation expert with extensive expertise in health misinformation (traditional & social media) & health policy. She led CAREX Canada (a national exposure surveillance and knowledge translation research project) for over 10 years & published widely in public health & epidemiology journals. **Gordon Pennycook** is a cognitive psychologist with expertise in the psychology of misinformation & the underlying science of human reasoning and decision-making. He won the "Researcher of the Year" award from the Poynter Institute's International Fact-checking Network and has published extensively, in both high-impact peer-reviewed journals & the popular press on the topic of misinformation. **Christen Rachul** is an applied linguist with expertise in health and science communication in variety of contexts including the popular media. She has published extensively on the issues that arise when specialized scientific knowledge is translated for lay audiences. **Collaborators:** We have brought together a team of ideal collaborators – including PHAC and members of the international community – consisting of world-renowned biomedical (virology) & communication researchers, KT and policy development experts and those with close links to the news media community (see letters of support). The HLI RAs () also have considerable expertise ideal for this research.

V. Impact: Our project directly aligns with 3 of the objectives of this funding opportunity.

i) Contribute to the global response to the COVID-19 outbreak: We will enhance research capacity to support policy development, programming and engagement activities in countering misinformation as part of a global outbreak response.

ii) Strengthen the understanding of the impact of COVID-19: We will inform the development of the tools & skills necessary to better equip Canadians (individually & organizationally) to deal with online misinformation. The deliverables & KT plan include outputs that will directly engage the public in fostering critical thinking while also providing regulatory and social pathways used for combatting misinformation. We will empower Canadians and institutions to mitigate the impacts of online misinformation both now and in the future. Directly engaging the public via events, publications, and innovative communications, the HLI and team will provide Canadians with the tools to effectively and critically navigate growing online spaces, including but not limited to connecting the public with important regulatory tools such as official regulatory complaint mechanisms.

iii) Provide evidence to inform clinical and public health response: Our third objective will directly build capacity to address online misinformation through expert knowledge, enhanced cooperation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and knowledge transfer to key government and civil society stakeholders as well as the general public.

**Pages 17 to / à 26
are withheld pursuant to sections
sont retenues en vertu des articles**

19(1), 20(1)(b), 21(1)(a)

**of the Access to Information Act
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



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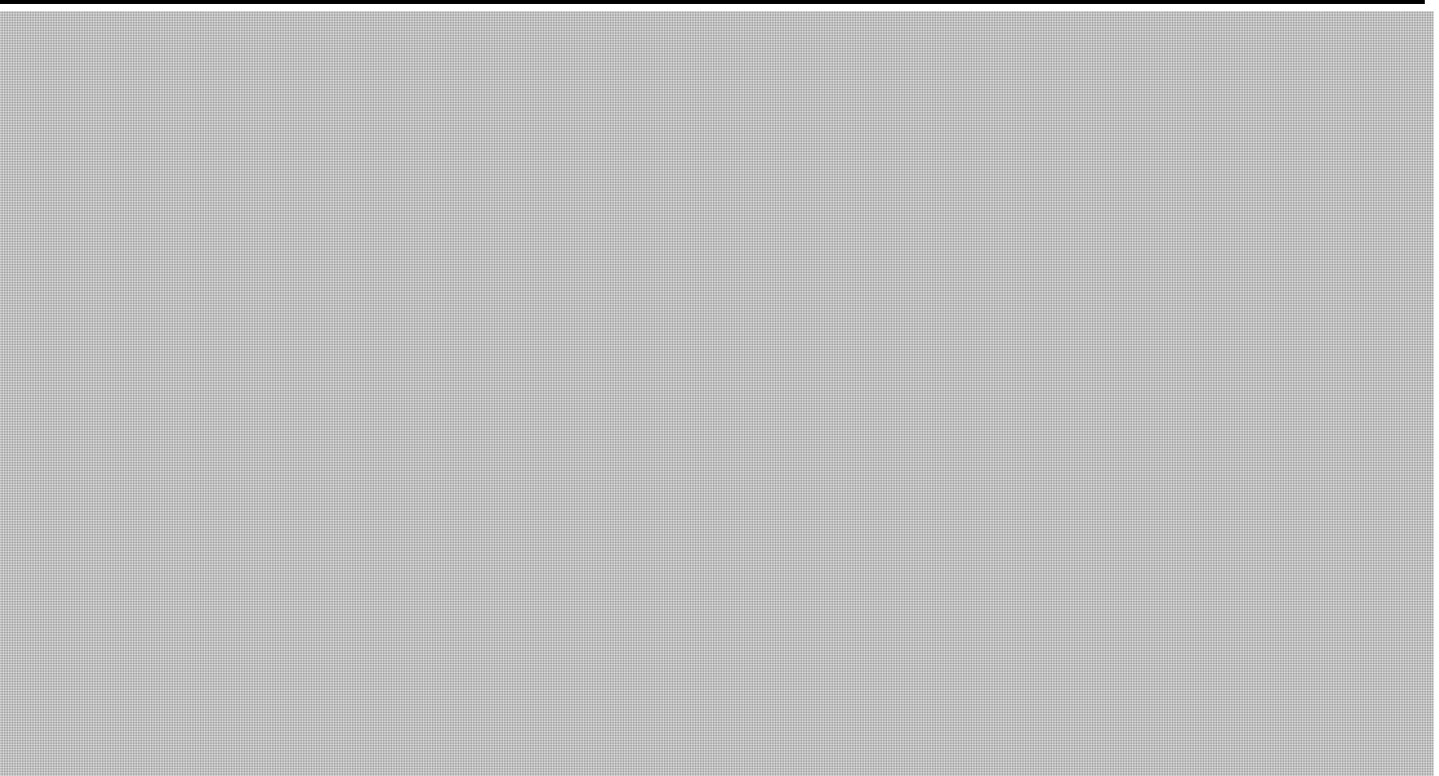
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Human Resources

Surname Caulfield	Given Names Timothy	Role Nominated Principal Applicant	Hours / week 
Surname Pennycook	Given Names Gordon	Role Co-Applicant	Hours / week 
Surname Peters	Given Names Cheryl	Role Co-Applicant	Hours / week 
Surname Rachul	Given Names Christen	Role Co-Applicant	Hours / week 



Surname	Given Names	Role	Hours / week
Surname	Given Names	Role	Hours / week
Surname	Given Names	Role	Hours / week
Surname	Given Names	Role	Hours / week

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Budget Justification

University of Alberta Budget – Timothy Caulfield

Research Associate: funds will be used to support two [REDACTED] Research Associate positions for each year. These individuals will lead the data collection, analyses and KT activities associated with the research proposed. [REDACTED]

Student Research Assistant: an LLB student will be hired on an hourly basis to assist with data collection, analysis and preparation of manuscripts. This student will facilitate the work of the Research Associates and Caulfield and will be paid at a rate of [REDACTED]

Interdisciplinary workshop: An interdisciplinary workshop will take place during the second year of the project, with [REDACTED] budgeted (approx. costs of [REDACTED]). These funds will be used to cover the travel, meal and accommodation costs of workshop participants (budgeted under *Travel* category in online form).

Publications costs: [REDACTED] has been allocated to cover publications costs associated with peer-reviewed open access articles. [REDACTED]

Travel costs: [REDACTED] has been budgeted to cover travel costs of project members travelling to events to present results. [REDACTED]

Creative work: [REDACTED] has been allocated to support the development of creative work (e.g. imagery for SCI+POP, online messaging etc.). Caulfield has worked closely with his brother (Sean Caulfield, Centennial Professor in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta) on a range of creative initiatives blending artistic images with evidence-based research to produce unique and effective communication messages. Please see:

Caulfield, Timothy

<https://theconversation.com/mixing-science-and-art-to-make-the-truth-more-interesting-than-lies-100221>. These funds will be used to hire a fine arts student to produce original creative work. An hourly wage of [REDACTED] has been allocated.

[REDACTED]

Construction and maintenance of data sets: The Institute hires computer scientists to construct and maintain data sets. The software they provide enables data to be captured from websites or social media platforms, and then organized and maintained in a manner which enables coding (analysis) to take place. The software utilized also assists in performing statistical analysis. Often these computer scientists are required to develop new programs and software (or aspects of them), in order to execute specific tasks required by projects. Per dataset it costs the Institute between [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

University of Alberta Total Request: [REDACTED]

University of Manitoba Budget—Christen Rachul

Research Associate: will be responsible for data collection, analysis, preparation of manuscripts and KT activities associated with the proposed media analyses. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Software expenses: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Publication costs: [REDACTED] has been allocated to cover the publications costs associated with the production of a peer reviewed article (budgeted under *Other* category in online form, split over years 1 and 2).

Supplies costs: [REDACTED] has been budgeted to cover supply costs associated with the production and printing of posters (budgeted under *Expendables* category in online form).

Travel costs: [REDACTED] has been budgeted to cover travel costs of project members travelling to events to present results of this project.

University of Manitoba Total Request: [REDACTED]

University of Calgary Budget – Cheryl Peters

Research Associate: will be responsible for data collection, analysis, preparation of manuscripts and KT activities associated with the proposed media analyses. [REDACTED]

Travel Costs: [REDACTED] has been budgeted to cover travel costs of the Research Associate to present results of this project.

University of Calgary Total Request: [REDACTED]

University of Regina Budget -- Gordon Pennycook

Graduate Student: a Master's student will be hired for two years, who will help with the completion of the behavioural science studies of the grant. [REDACTED]

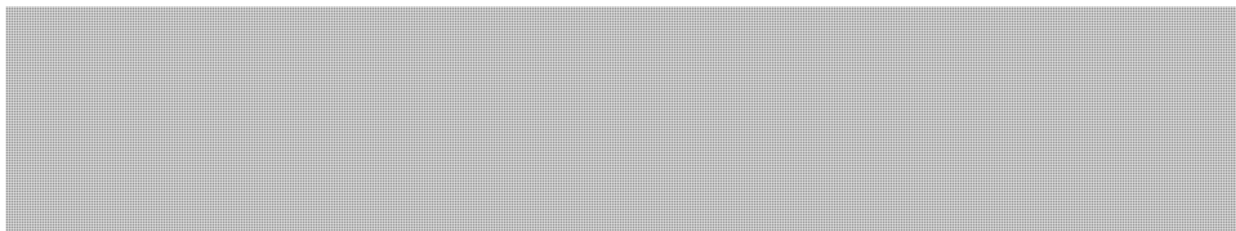
Data collection and analysis: three discrete studies will be performed including an exploration of: 1) understanding susceptibility to coronavirus misinformation; 2) quantifying the downstream impacts of coronavirus misinformation, and; 3) testing potential interventions against coronavirus misinformation. Studies 1 and 2 will be accomplished in a single

Caulfield, Timothy

session with 1,000 participants each (based on past precedent in Pennycook's behavioural science lab). Study 3 will consist of two data collections (1,000 participants in each). For each study his team will recruit representative samples from both Canada and the USA.



University of Regina Total Request:



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Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

Notice of Decision / Avis de décision

Application Number/Numéro de la demande: [REDACTED]

Committee Code/Code du comité: CV2

Applicants/Candidats: Prof. Timothy A. Caulfield

With/Avec: Dr. G. Pennycook

Dr. C. Peters

Dr. C. Rachul

Institution paid/
Établissement payé: University of Alberta

Title/Titre: Coronavirus Outbreak: Mapping and Countering Misinformation

Primary Inst./ Population and Public Health / Santé publique et des populations

Inst. principal:

Other Related Inst./

Autres inst. connexes:

Competition Outcome/Résultats du concours:

Operating Grant: COVID-19 - Social dynamics, communication and trust / Subv. de fonct. : COVID-19 - Dynamique sociale, communication et confiance

February/Février 18, 2020

Number in competition/Nbre de demandes dans le concours:**Number approved/Nbre de demandes approuvées:****Decision on your application/
Décision sur votre demande:**

Approved / Approuvée

**Average annual amount/
Montant annuel moyen:**

\$381,708

Term/Durée:

2 yrs/ans 0 months/mois

Peer Review Committee Recommendation, for your information and use/**Recommandation du comité d'examen par les pairs, pour fins d'information et d'utilisation:****Committee/Comité:**

Canadian 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Rapid Research / Intervention de recherche rapide contre le nouveau coronavirus de 2019 (COVID-19)

**Application rank within the competition/
Rang de la demande dans ce concours:****Percent Rank Within the Competition/
Rang en pourcentage au sein du concours:****Rating/
Cote:****Recommended average annual amount/
Montant annuel moyen recommandé:**

\$190,854

*** Applications receiving a score of less than 3.5 on any evaluation criteria will not be considered for Funding. / Les demandes qui ont reçu une note inférieure à 3.5 pour n'importe quel des critères d'évaluation ne sont pas admissibles.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Project Title

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard

Principal Applicant

Timothy Caulfield
Health Law Institute
Faculty of Law
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H5
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Co-Applicant

Canadian Association of Science Centres
100 Ramsey Lake Road
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PART 1: PROPOSED PROJECT

Overview

The pandemic-driven rise in misinformation has had a tremendous deleterious impact on the wellbeing of Canadians. The spread of scientific mis and dis information has been identified as a serious threat to public health that can influence behaviour and ultimately result in poor health outcomes (Loomba et al., 2021; Ahmad & Murad, 2020; Roozenbeek et al., 2020; Rocha et al., 2021; Swire-Thompson & Lazer, 2020.) Recent studies indicate that debunking misinformation on social media is effective (Caulfield, 2020; Kreps and Kriner, 2022). Providing credible scientific information through culturally aligned messages and messengers as well as prebunking, aimed at improving people's ability to spot misinformation, are effective in countering misinformation, as shown by research related to climate change (Lewandowsky, 2021; Cook et al., 2017; van der Linden et al., 2017; Lewandowsky & Ecker, 2017) and health (Walter et al., 2020; Basol et al., 2021).

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is an internationally recognized initiative that has developed a first-in-class platform for debunking misinformation. Its creation, which was led by the Canadian Association of Science Centres in partnership with the University of Alberta's Health Law Institute and COVID-19 Resources Canada, was in response to an overwhelming need to specifically develop and disseminate best in class scientific information surrounding COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. To date, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord has been enormously successful and effective in addressing the viral spread of misinformation as it related to the pandemic, through its extensive debunking efforts (e.g., #ScienceUpFirst and #LaSciencedAbord hashtags been shared to a combined audience of over 515 million, and has garnered over 620,000 engagements i.e., shares, comments, likes), while simultaneously bridging the the gap between the public's needs and scientific expertise.

Fueled by a large network of scientists, researchers, professionals, science communicators, and community partners (See Appendix I), ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord provides the knowledge and tools Canadians need to separate sense from nonsense, resulting in better health and health outcomes. Currently focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is strategically positioned to explore the impact of misinformation in the context of a variety of health and science policy domains including (e.g., climate change, mental health, cannabis use, etc.).

Objectives

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord directly addresses the following objectives:

1. Address misinformation in a timely and accessible way, creating a bridge between the public need for credible information and scientific expertise.

The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord initiative creates and disseminates impactful social media content aimed at empowering Canadians to make informed decisions and choices. Scientifically accurate, timely and sharable content will continue to be made available on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Tik Toc. Content is curated in both English (#ScienceUpFirst) and French (#LaSciencedAbord) and is scientifically backed and vetted by subject experts. The team strives for all content produced to be diverse and inclusive and it will continue to be accessible, highly graphically designed, with text written at a grade six reading level. The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord

initiative will also continue to improve content accessibility for individuals with vision and/or hearing impairments.

2. Expand beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address high priority areas for Canadians (e.g. mental health and addictions, climate action and health).

Currently focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and its transition to a more endemic phase, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is strategically positioned to explore and provide a science communication focus to other areas of health misinformation, such as those related to mental health, climate change, and addictions.

The initiative will develop a robust plan to expand, which includes assessing lessons learned from past vaccine misinformation campaigns and identifying areas of improvement that occurred during the growth of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord's current platform. Using market and audience research, a national communications plan and campaign will be developed to highlight expansion into broader areas of health misinformation.

3. Continue to grow a robust national network of partner organizations.

The next phase of the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord initiative will leverage the extraordinary existing platform (See Appendix I), which is supported by three distinct partner networks:

- **The Executive Advisory Committee:** A dedicated Advisory Committee, composed of internationally recognized scholars from a range of Canadian universities, an Indigenous research lab, media organizations, and science communication companies, will help to inform the strategic direction of the program.
- **The National Coalition of Experts:** A national network of experts including notable researchers, scientists and healthcare experts from across Canada in various healthcare fields will vet and amplify all content.
- **The Organizational and Community Partnerships:** ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord's partnership model in which community and organizational partners from across Canada help identify community needs, direct efforts and amplify reach. The platform currently has over 20 partners including Agence Science Presse, BC CDC – Indigenous Community Resources, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Lotus STEMM, South Asian Health Network, Children's Healthcare Canada and CIHR and American Association for the Advancement of Science.

It is important to recognize the collective strength of the individuals and community partners that support this initiative and the knowledge and skills they contribute. Several academics involved, for example, have been exploring issues associated with health and science mis and disinformation for decades (e.g., myself, Joe Schwarcz, Tania Bubela, and Ubaka Ogbogu). The interdisciplinary nature and expertise of the platform ensures content created is evidence based, comprehensively informed, and responsive to diverse needs. Lastly, the individuals and organisations involved in this initiative have the reputations and networks to further grow and develop ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord.

In the coming year maximising audience reach will be a priority as the initiative grows. Specifically expansion of organizational and community partnerships across Canada will be a key focus, as will efforts made to grow the National Coalition of Experts to support content creation addressing misinformation in other areas of health. The Executive Advisory Committee will also be expanded to reflect content and platform growth.

Diversity and inclusion approach

The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard initiative reflects the values of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) in all content creation and partnerships. An important focus of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is connecting to communities disproportionately affected by social media misinformation. Through impactful partnerships, grounded in understanding and trust, the team currently collaborates with Indigenous, South Asian and Black communities to address community-identified misinformation needs. As noted above, efforts over the coming year will be made to grow organisational partnerships with these communities. Appendix II provides a good example of a recent collaboration tackling misinformation with Indigenous communities in Manitoba. To ensure content that is diverse and inclusive, the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard team works closely with IDEA consultants to evaluate content and improve platform accessibility. As an Employer Partner of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, an organizational partner of Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute's 50-30 Ecosystem initiative, and through a working relationships with IDEA-STEM, the Canadian Association of Science Centres provides the ScienceUpFirst team with access to cutting edge research and best practices resources and training for hiring a diverse workforce and creating inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Part 2: EVIDENCE OF REACH & IMPACT

ScienceUpFirst launched on January 25, 2021 and is currently on **Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok**. A separate feed, LaSciencedAboard, was launched in June, 2021 and features exclusively French content created for Francophone audiences. The initiative's enormous success to date and subsequent impact can be observed in the key metrics noted below, all of which are tied to the project objectives included in this proposal.

Objective 1: Address misinformation in a timely and accessible way.

- Metrics: # of posts, audience engagement, # media engagements (See Appendix III)
- 2021/22 impact results:
 - 160 bilingual pieces of content (infographics, messages, videos) have been shared
 - Shared to a combined audience of over 525 million social media accounts
 - Leading to over 625,000 engagements (shares, comments, likes, etc.)
 - Five virtual townhall events, including two in French, have engaged ~5000 people.
 - >1000 editorial mentions (an equivalent of \$10 million in advertising). Received significant media attention during launch of initiative and subsequent campaigns, including interviews, commentaries in a broad range of regional and national media sources (TV, print, radio) including, for example, the Globe and Mail, the CBC, CTV.

Objective 2: Expand beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address other high priority areas for Canadians

- Metrics: # of campaigns addressing key topics
- 2021/22 impact results: Three distinct campaigns focused on:
 - Misinformation Tactics campaign. Posts aimed at educating the public on key misinformation tactics employed on social media.
 - Kids and Vaccines campaign. In three weeks, mobilized a national day to draw focus on the importance of vaccinating the 5-11yr cohort (See Appendix IV)
 - Art in Science Communications Campaign. Engaged artists from across Canada to create art pieces reflecting scientific communication principles.

Objective 3: Continue to grow a robust national network of partner organizations.

- Metrics: # of Coalition members, # of national partners, # community partner organizations
- 2021/22 impact results:
 - Grew national coalition of over 100 scientists and other experts to vet content and share posts.
 - Grew a network of 25 national partners help amplify content
 - Established working relationships with three (3) community partner organizations (e.g. See Appendix II)

Using an innovative model built on the power of the initiative's established networks, (see Appendix I) and a process established through iterative testing during the pilot phase (see Appendix V), the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard team is empowered to quickly mobilize and leverage existing relationships, resources, and research programs to achieve impact (e.g., see results of the Kids and Vaccines campaign Appendix IV).

The effectiveness of the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard content is assessed through formative evaluation. Impact metrics are collected and evaluated weekly, including post engagement, combined audience reach, and number of followers. Adjustments to social media content and strategy are continually made to improve impact. In addition to rigorous quantitative evaluation, an external coalition of experts will continue to meet bi-weekly to evaluate the performance of posts and improve future content. A Coalition of Community partners meets quarterly to evaluate and advise on the progress and impact of community partnerships. A yearly summative evaluation by an external group will measure the performance of social media content and engagements.

Reaching target audiences

The target audience for ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is the broadest possible audience – the 87% of the general public across Canada who on average exceed 1.5 hours a day of social media use (statista.com). The World Health Organization has noted that, when dealing with vaccine hesitancy, “the general public is your target audience, not the vocal vaccine denier” (WHO, 2017). Within this broad group, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard also aims to:

- Empower communities disproportionately affected by online health misinformation.
- Specifically address the needs of Quebec and Francophone audiences across Canada and internationally, through the LaSciencedAboard social media channels. Content creation is supported by a Montreal-based French team.
- Actively expand its reach into younger demographics (18-24). Currently, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard reaches a national audience composed of ~66% females and 34% males ranging between 25-54 yrs, fueled with its July launch of TikTok account.

Through partnerships and strategic engagement with social media influencers, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard continues to grow, gaining followers and expanding into priority demographics.

Addressing COVID 19 misinformation & strengthening science literacy

It is critical that Canadians are equipped to make evidence-based decisions to help them build a healthier, more resilient futures for themselves and their communities. Yet this ability is increasingly jeopardized by the proliferation of misinformation on social media. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the negative impacts of false information.

A growing number of studies indicate that debunking misinformation on social media is effective (Caulfield, 2020). Providing credible scientific information through culturally aligned messages and messengers as well as prebunking, aimed at improving people's ability to spot misinformation, are effective in countering misinformation, as shown by research related to climate change (Lewandowsky, 2021; Cook et al., 2017; van der Linden et al., 2017; Lewandowsky & Ecker, 2017) and health (Walter et al., 2020; Basol et al., 2021).

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is an effective platform in debunking and prebunking information related to COVID-19 issues. The model is readily adaptable to take on other science topics prone to myths and misinformation. Its success demonstrates the importance of having a trusted, committed team dedicated to seeking out misinformation and creating relatable content that refutes it.

Part 3: BUDGET

Budget Item	Cost	Comments
Personel	\$1,368, 000	Supporting: -10.85 FTE - 10+ contract positions
Travel	\$ 30,000	-Eligible travel costs
Materials	\$ 78,000	-Office materials -Printing/photocopy and postage -Promotional fees
Equipment	\$6,000	-Computers, printers and related hardware
Utilities	\$6,000	-Cellular phone plan
Other	\$12,000	-Year end audit -Project insurance

Appendix VI Outlines the project timeframe and milestones. A detailed budget breakdown is provided in Appendix VII. The Budget justification can be found in Appendix VIII and as a separate attachment.

Given the tremendous success of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard's first year of operations, members of the initiative's team are actively seeking additional funding opportunities to expand and grow its mandate and are currently in discussions with a number of potential funding partners (e.g., Fonds de recherche du Québec, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Mental Health and Addictions). Secured funding from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research will not only support the ongoing operations of the initiative during a critical time, but will undoubtedly have an impact on our current and future discussions with other funding agencies in ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard's favour. It is such institutional support that will allow the development of a world class platform committed to stemming the proliferation of health misinformation.

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord Participant Table

Principal Investigator: Timothy Caulfield

Timothy Caulfield is a Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy, a Professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Health, and Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta. His interdisciplinary research on topics like stem cells, genetics, research ethics, the public representations of science and public health policy has allowed him to publish over 350 academic articles. He has won numerous academic and writing awards and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. He works intensively with the popular press, writing and providing commentary to a wide range of outlets, has written award-winning popular books, has co-written, co-produced and hosted a hugely successful television series, and along with his team and project collaborators has produced unique public engagement activities, many of which use art to talk about science. Most relevant to this application is the work he and his team have done over the past two decades exploring issues associated with health and science mis and disinformation.

Canadian Association of Science Centres

The Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC), a registered Charity, is Canada's largest science engagement network, collectively engaging over 10 million people each year in accessible, locally relevant STEM learning experiences. CASC's vision is for Canada to have a thriving science and innovation culture of engaged citizens. We do this through our mission to empower a national network of organizations that champion Science and Innovation by making science approachable, relevant, and accessible.

CASC represents a network of trusted sources of accurate, credible science and public trust surveys demonstrate that Science Centres rank #1 among Canadians' most trusted sources of reliable scientific information (Ontario Science Centre, 2018). As such, CASC was an ideal organization to lead ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord, a national initiative tackling online misinformation originally envisioned by Senator Stan Kutcher and Professor Timothy Caulfield in the summer of 2020, wherein public trust is essential.

Dr. Marianne Mader, Executive Director, has over 15 years of not for profit experience as a Co-Founder, Managing Director, and Executive Director, managing teams and collaborating at the intersection of academic, industrial, governmental, and community stakeholders. Her strengths in strategic planning, creative thinking, design, and implementation of funding programs, and partnership development have enabled innovative initiatives in the formal and informal science education sectors. She is a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society College, a member of the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference, and received a US Antarctic Service Medal.

Knowledge Users

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord reaches a national audience that is ~66% female and 34% male, ranging between 25-54 yrs. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord has an engaged following of over 52,000 individuals located in urban and rural centres across Canada.

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is building collaborative partnerships with Indigenous, Black and South Asian communities and supporting knowledge translation at post secondary institutions including the University of Alberta, University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.

Appendix

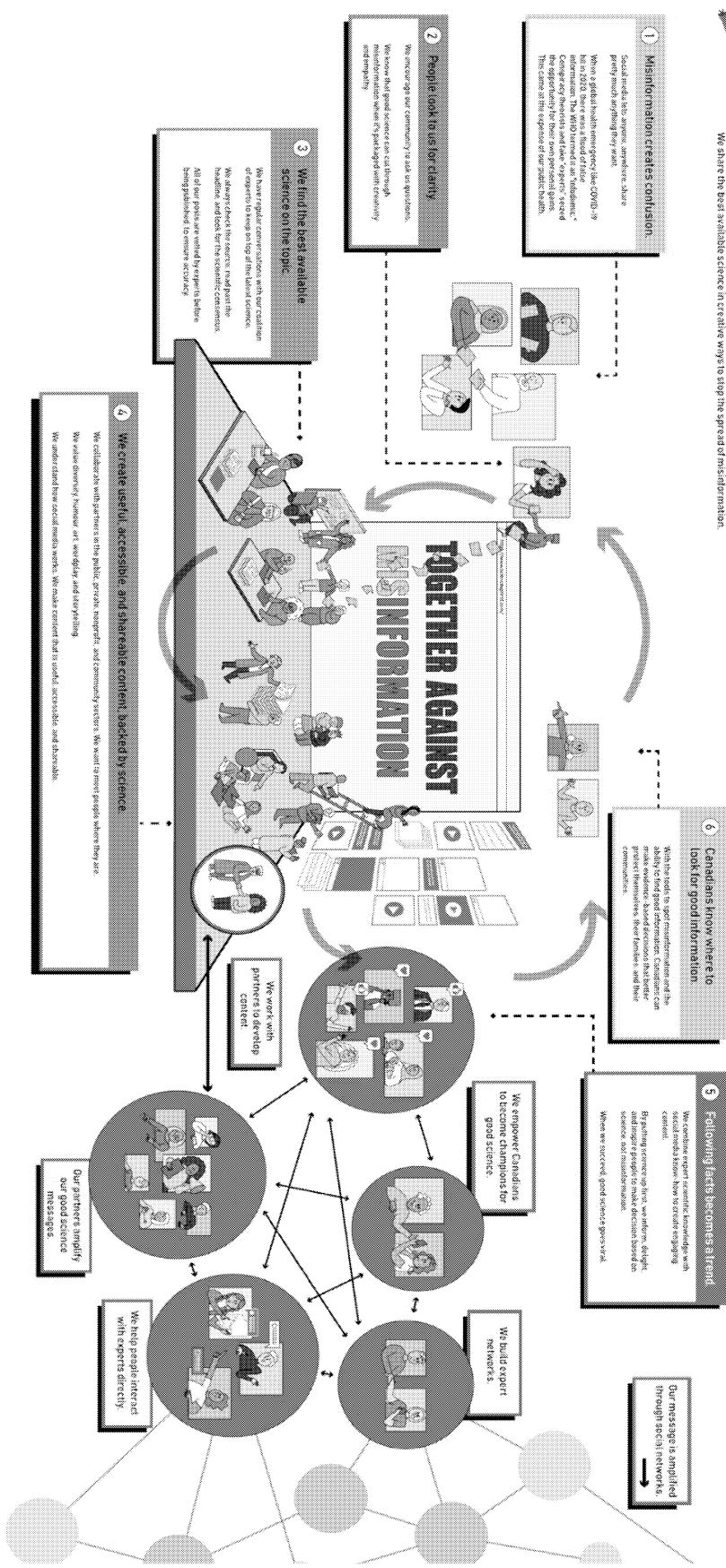
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APPENDIX I: ScienceUpFirst Model



TOGETHER AGAINST MISINFORMATION

We share the best available science in creative ways to stop the spread of misinformation.



APPENDIX II: Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Press Release

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Helps Vaccine Hesitant in Manitoba's Urban Indigenous Community



(Winnipeg, February 28, 2022) -- On Tuesday, March 15, [Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre](#) will host a virtual roundtable event to address vaccine hesitancy within the urban Indigenous community. Presented in partnership with [ScienceUpFirst](#), this event features an esteemed panel of health and science professionals, this live event will answer questions about vaccines and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"We know our community has and continues to face barriers and hesitancies when accessing vaccines. Many of us at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre faced those same uncertainties and fears throughout the pandemic, and that's why we feel it so necessary to create opportunities for our families to connect with Indigenous health professionals and Elders from within our community. This event will be a safe space for families to ask questions directly, and we hope this will help put them at ease to make informed decisions," says Rosalyn Boucha, Communications Manager, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

The Roundtable guests include:

- [Dr. Ryan Giroux](#), Metis Nation of Alberta, Pediatrician, St. Michael's Hospital
- [Dr. Marcia Anderson](#), Cree-Anishinaabe doctor in Indigenous health, public health & general internal medicine.
- [Dr. Lisa Monkman](#), Anishinaabe, member of Lake MB First Nation, Family Physician, Dauphin Medical Clinic,
- [Ed Azure](#), Knowledge Keeper, University of Manitoba

- The event will be hosted by [Niigaan Sinclair](#), Anishinaabe (St. Peter's/Little Peguis) and an Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba

This event is **free** for all to attend. It takes place on **Tuesday, March 15 at 7 pm cst**. Register [here](#).

The virtual roundtable event will kick off the Ma Mawi Chi Itata's ***Protecting Our Future Project***. The project will address COVID-19 myths and misconceptions by providing accessible, culturally relevant, and science-backed information to community in a safe and trusting way. The hopeful outcomes will be people getting vaccinated to protect themselves, protect their people, and protect their future. The project is guided by the urban Indigenous community through consultations with community members, community service providers, health professionals, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata staff.

For further details, follow along on Ma Mawi Chi Itata [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata

The name Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata translates from Ojibway into the phrase “we all work together to help one another”. The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc. (Ma Mawi) was born in the fall of 1984 by committed community members who sought an Indigenous solution to supporting and rebuilding families. Since that time, Ma Mawi has worked to support families to better care for children by creating meaningful opportunities for community and family involvement. Ma Mawi believes that strengthening families is a worthy investment in the future. Today Ma Mawi offers more than 50 programs, 11 sites, and 200+ staff and volunteers.

About ScienceUpFirst

ScienceUpFirst is a national collective of independent scientists, researchers, health care experts and science communicators. We share the **best available science in creative ways to stop the spread of misinformation**. We combine expert scientific knowledge with social media know-how to create engaging content. By putting science up first, we inform, delight, and inspire people to make evidence-based decisions. The idea for ScienceUpFirst started with Senator Stan Kutcher and Professor Timothy Caulfield in the summer of 2020. Since then, we've grown into a funded initiative of the Canadian Association of Science Centres.

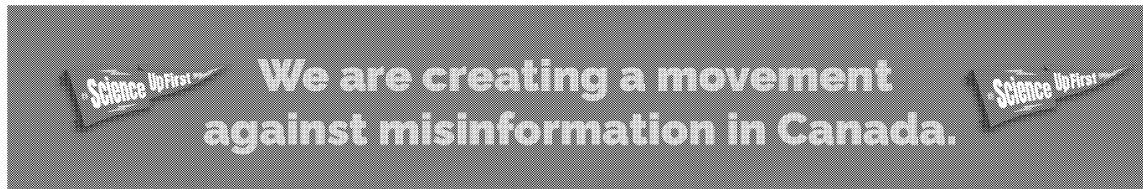
Media Contacts

For information and interviews please contact:

Amanda Fruci

647-998-2737; amanda@afcommunications.ca

APPENDIX III: ScienceUpFirst Impact



Since our launch on January 25, 2021...

#ScienceUpFirst/#LaScien cedA bord have been shared to a combined audience of

525 million+

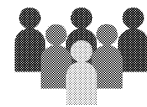
Leading to over

625,000

engagements



Our 52,000+ followers are:



Engaged Canadians seeking the best available science.

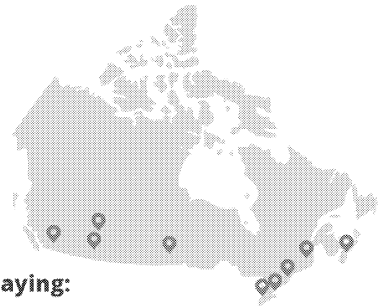


2/3 women



1/3 men

From coast to coast to coast.



What people are saying:

"This is so helpful thank you. Recently I heard people talking about this and other topics you've covered recently and I knew to come here to get the real information"



"There is so much misinformation on the Internet, particularly about vaccines, so tools like this are helpful."



"This is a terrific account to follow. Academics fighting covid misinformation. Share, share, share"



To expand our reach and ensure our content is both scientifically accurate and culturally relevant, we partner with:

Government



Academia



Not for Profits



National Campaigns

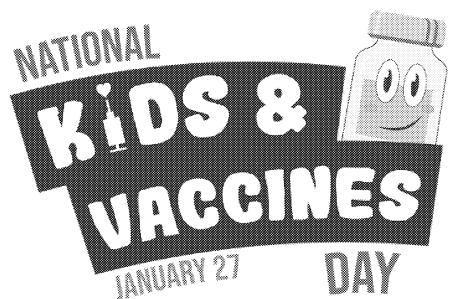


Community Initiatives



APPENDIX IV: Kids and Vaccine Day Impact

On January 27th, we launched the first ever
National Kids and Vaccines Day



5,300+
posts

25,000+
engagements

37 million+
potential impressions

Joined by partners across Canada

2,800 unique contributors, including...



Justin Trudeau
@JustinTrudeau

To all of the parents out there: If you haven't gotten your kids vaccinated yet, please, get that taken care of as soon as you can. It's the best thing you can do to keep them, and those around them, safe right now.
#KidsVaccinesDay



Dr. Theresa Tam
@CPHO_Canada

On Jan 27th organisations and experts from across disciplines will be coming together to promote vaccine confidence and highlight the importance of building up protection among children during
#KidsVaccinesDay.

We hosted a town hall for parents to ask questions



4 experts **60** minutes

478 registrants

253 attendees

APPENDIX V: ScienceUpFirst Process

THE PROCESS IN ACTION:



APPENDIX VI: ScienceUpFirst Workplan

(March 2022 - March 2023): COVID Transition, Expansion and Building Capacity \$1.5 million

Social Media Content

- Creating 150+ social media posts in English and French, averaging 3 unique posts per week. Posting on all major social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok
- Addressing misinformation during the transition between pandemic and endemic, expanding content to address misinformation related to key health areas including mental health and addictions.
- Create a plan to build on ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord model to expand into priority themes addressing misinformation
 - What are lessons learned from addressing COVID-19 and Vaccine misinformation
 - What potential gaps exist in the model to expand into new science and technology misinformation topics
- Expand the coalition of experts to support content creation addressing misinformation in key health areas and climate change.
- Expand the Executive Advisory Committee to reflect the content and platform expansion.
- Build communications plan addressing expansion into tackling other areas of science and technology misinformation
 - Environmental scan of science communication landscape for key themes
 - Identifying and building relationships with social media influencer landscape
 - Identifying key science literacy community organizations working with people facing systemic barriers
- Hire and onboarding of key team members to support platform expansion.

Community Partnerships

- Continue to foster partnerships with BIOPC communities, focusing on building national partnerships with Indigenous communities, South Asian and Black communities.
 - Building national partnerships with Indigenous communities.
- Continue to build a national network of community leaders and experts.
- Empowering communities through community-led collaborations
- Collaborate on the creation of 4 community-led engagements focusing on specific areas of misinformation. Ex: virtual town halls, community events

National Reach

- Continue to grow the national partnership network to reflect expanded content scope.
- Working collaboratively with partner organizations to amplify content and promote ScienceUpFirst and the movement against misinformation in new and unique ways ex. partnerships with maple leaf sports.
- Collaborate with national partners on 4 major campaigns to combat misinformation in specific subject areas ex. mental health week, women's health, environmental sustainability.

APPENDIX VII: ScienceUpFirst Budget

***Provided as a separate excel spreadsheet*

APPENDIX VIII: Budget Justification

ScienceUpFirst Budget Justification

Personnel: \$1.368 million

ScienceUpFirst strategy development and implementation, platform expansion, funding sustainability, national partner development and human resources will be supported by the following positions:

Budget based on structure developed in 2021-22 pilot (year 1) of the project.

University of Alberta Health Law Institute Employees

- 1.25 FTE Research Associate: [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for data collection, analyses and KT activities associated with associated with misinformation research
- Executive Director (HLI): [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for managing project reporting, administration of funds, and assistance with development of research and KT activities
- [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst Employees

- Executive Director (CASC): [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for supporting strategic direction, project sustainability, and connectivity to the national network of informal science engagement.
- ScienceUpFirst Director: [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for supporting strategic direction, project sustainability, platform growth and national partnership development.
- Communications Manager (CASC): [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility initiatives
- Operations Manager (CASC): [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for financial support and human resources.
- [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst project management and community and partner engagement will be supported by:

- Project Manager/Engagement: [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for all project management, event and engagement coordination.
- The above position is subject to a benefit rate of [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst community partnerships will be supported by the following positions:

- Community Engagement Lead: [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for developing community partnerships and engagement strategy.

- Community Engagement Liaison: [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for supporting all elements of community partnerships.
- [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst content creation will be supported by the following positions:

- Communications and Social Media Manager \$80,000/yr (1.0 FTE)
 - Responsible for leading team of content creators and science communicators and building ScienceUpFirst content strategy.
- Content Producer - English \$65,000/yr (1.0 FTE)
 - Responsible for English content creation.
- Content Producer - French \$65,000/yr (1.0 FTE)
 - Responsible for French content creation.
- Story Teller Lead Science Communicator \$75,000/yr (1.0 FTE)
 - Responsible for developing all story elements for content creation.
- [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst Contract Positions

- Accounting/Bookkeeping [REDACTED]
- Legal Support [REDACTED]
- Website development and maintenance [REDACTED]
- Data Analyst [REDACTED]

Additional support for content creations and engagement includes:

- Coalition science vetting leads (multiple positions) [REDACTED]
- Translation Professional [REDACTED]
- Video and event production [REDACTED]
- Audience Engagement Specialist [REDACTED]
- Media relations consultant [REDACTED]
- ScienceUpFirst will engage social media consultants and strategists to develop a national misinformation campaign focusing on expanded health areas. Including market research and campaign development: [REDACTED]

Travel: \$30,000

Funds allocated will be used to cover eligible travel expenses of team members attending and/or presenting at, for example, ScienceUpFirst strategic planning meetings, national conferences/symposiums and/or partnership building events.

Materials: \$78,000

Funds requested will be used to support the project's infrastructure and include:

- Office supplies [REDACTED]
- Printing/photocopying/ postage [REDACTED]
- Software subscriptions/ website domains [REDACTED]
- Promotion fees (media/digital) [REDACTED]

Equipment \$6,000

Funds requested will be used to support the hardware needs of new positions

- Office equipment \$6,000

Utilities \$6,000

Funds requested will be used to support the cellular phone plans of full time staff

Other \$12,000

Funds requested are to fund a year end audit, plus project insurance:

- Year end audit [REDACTED]
- Project insurance [REDACTED]

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Kreps S., D. Kriner, 2022. The COVID-19 Infodemic and the Efficacy of Interventions Intended to Reduce Misinformation, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2022;, nfab075, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfab075>

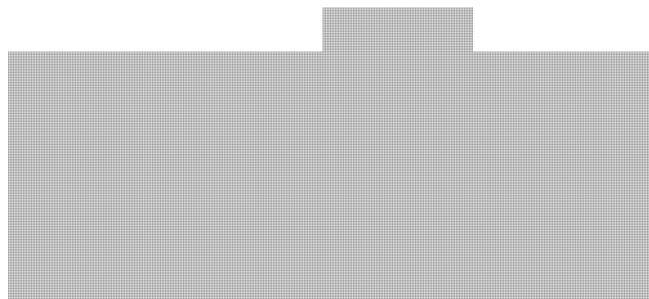
ScienceUpFirst Budget

For the period of: March 1st, 2022- March

a) Personnel

Permanent, Full-time

Strategic Oversight - Faculty of Law,
Health Law Institute
Misinformation Expert (HLI)
Executive Director, CASC
Communications Manager, CASC
Operations Manager, CASC

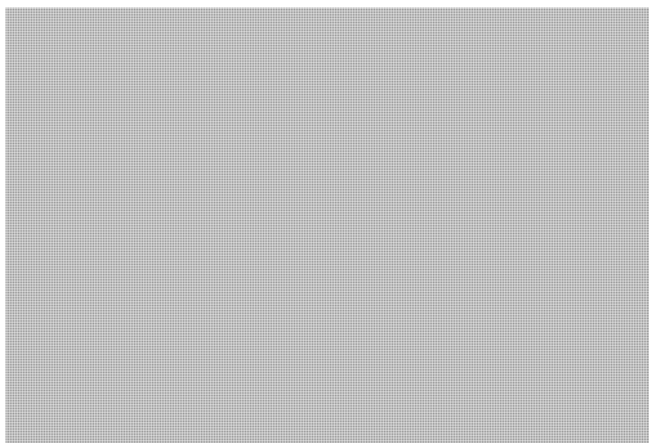


Full-time, fixed term staff until March 31, 2022

Director, ScienceUpFirst (term until March 31, 2022)
Project Manager
Community Engagement Lead

Communications & Social Media Manager
Content Producer - English
Content Producer - French

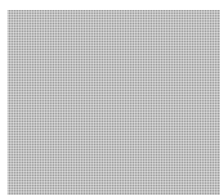
Story Teller Lead - science communicator
Community engagement liaison
Total Fulltime



1,022,148

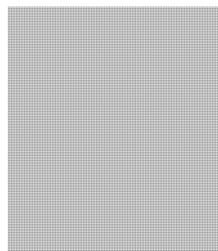
Contractual Administrative Team

Bookkeeper/Accountant
Legal advisor
Website development & maintenance
Data analyst



Contractual Communications Team

Social Media Consultant/Strategist
Media Relations Consultant
Audience engagement specialist
Translation Professional
Video and Event Production
Coalition science vetting leads

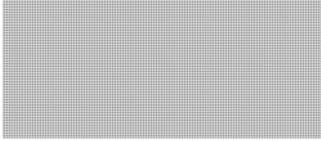


Total Contract

345,852

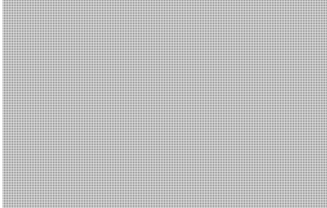
Subtotal		1,368,000
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b) Travel

Transportation	
Accommodation	
Meals and Incidentals	

Subtotal	30,000	30,000
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c) Materials

Office Supplies	
Project Materials (software subscriptions, website)	
Printing/Photocopying/postage	
Promotion fees (media, digital)	

Subtotal	78,000	78,000
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d) Equipment

Office Equipment (computers, printer, phone)	6,000
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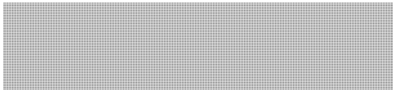
Subtotal	6,000	6,000
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e) Utilities

Utilities (phone plan)	6,000
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Subtotal	6,000	6,000
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h) Other (specify)

1) auditor	
2) insurance	

Subtotal	12,000	12,000
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Total Cost of Project		1,500,000
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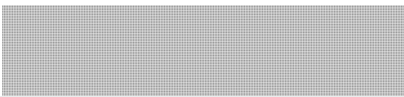
**Pages 120 to / à 133
are withheld pursuant to section
sont retenues en vertu de l'article**

19(1)

**of the Access to Information Act
de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information**



Signature of Institution Paid

Institution Paid Signature	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the statements "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms" as outlined in the CIHR Grants and Awards Guide, apply to any grant or award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the applicant's institution or the applicant(s) employing Institution(s).</p> <p>A signature is not required at institutions outside of Canada.</p> <p>If both your Program and submitting institution are using the Electronic Approval Tool on ResearchNet, a signature is not required for block 1 if the Authorized Official can bind the institution to all obligations outlined in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms". If the Authorized Official cannot bind the institution to all obligations in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms", complete block 2.</p>	
1. Signature of Authorized Official:	
Print Name: Denise Baker	Date: 4 Mar 2022
Signature: X	
2. If the Authorized Official above cannot bind the institution to all obligations outlined in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms", please provide additional signatures below as required.	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	

Signature of Research Institution

Institution Signature at Primary Location of Research (Awards Programs Only)	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the statements "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms for the Authorized Official at the Primary Location of Research" (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#1-G3) as outlined in the CIHR Grants and Awards Guide, apply to any award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the Nominated Principal Applicant's institution where the research is to be conducted.</p>	
Signature of Authorized Official:	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

Project Title

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord

Principal Applicant

Timothy Caulfield
Health Law Institute
Faculty of Law
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H5
Contact Email: caulfield@ualberta.ca

Co-Applicant

Canadian Association of Science Centres
100 Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, ON P3E 5S9

Telephone: 437-219-2412
Contact email: mader@casc-accs.com

PART 1: PROPOSED PROJECT

Overview:

The spread of misinformation has emerged as a defining issue of our era. A recent study of 19 countries involving almost 25,000 participants found that the vast majority view the spread of misinformation as a major threat, ranking it along with climate change (Thompson, 2022). Recently, the head of the FDA suggested that, in the U.S, the spread of misinformation was contributing to the erosion in life expectancy (Tirrell, 2023). A growing body of evidence supports this speculation (Loomba et al., 2021; Ahmad & Murad, 2020; Roozenbeek et al., 2020; Rocha et al., 2021; Swire-Thompson & Lazer, 2020). For example, in January of 2023 the Council of Canadian Academies released an analysis of the health and economic impacts of COVID misinformation, finding that, over just a small window of time, it resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths and over \$300 million in wasted healthcare dollars (Council of Canadian Academies, 2023). A 2022 World Health Organization review highlighted the adverse impact misinformation can have on mental health, timely care, and vaccine hesitancy (World Health Organization, 2022). And the intensity of the misinformation during COVID is now spilling over to domains, such as increasing hesitancy (Sun, 2022) for proven childhood vaccines (UNICEF, 2023) in a manner that seems likely to have global implications (Hotez, 2022). With new threats emerging – such as AI – the need to tackle misinformation in an evidence-informed manner has never been higher. There is good news, however, as more and more studies have found that a multi-pronged approach, one that includes thoughtful debunking strategies, can make a meaningful difference (Bak-Coleman et al., 2022; Porter, Velez, and Wood, 2023). Studies indicate that debunking misinformation on social media is effective (Caulfield, 2020; Kreps and Kriner, 2022). Providing credible scientific information through culturally aligned messages and messengers as well as prebunking, aimed at improving people's ability to spot misinformation, are effective in countering misinformation, as shown by research related to climate change (Lewandowsky, 2021; Cook et al., 2017; van der Linden et al., 2017; Lewandowsky & Ecker, 2017) and health (Walter et al., 2020; Basol et al., 2021).

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is an internationally recognized initiative that has developed a first-in-class platform for debunking misinformation. Its creation, which was led by the Canadian Association of Science Centres in partnership with the University of Alberta's Health Law Institute and COVID-19 Resources Canada, was in response to an overwhelming need to specifically develop and disseminate best in class scientific information surrounding COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. To date, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard has been enormously successful and effective in addressing the viral spread of misinformation (e.g., #ScienceUpFirst and #LaSciencedAboard hashtags have been shared to a combined audience of over 858 million, and have garnered over 980,000 engagements i.e., shares, comments, likes), while simultaneously bridging the gap between the public's needs and scientific expertise. As the need for countering misinformation grows, so too does the need to build capacity to meet that challenge.

Fueled by a large network of scientists, researchers, professionals, science communicators, and community partners (See Appendix I), ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard provides the knowledge and tools Canadians need to separate sense from nonsense, resulting in better health and health outcomes. Currently focused on the COVID-19 pandemic transition, vaccines and broader areas of health, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is strategically

positioned to explore the impact of misinformation in the context of a variety of health and science policy domains including (e.g., climate change, mental health, cannabis use, etc.).

Objectives:

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord directly addresses the following objectives:

1. Continue addressing misinformation in a timely and accessible way, creating a bridge between the public need for credible information and scientific expertise.

The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord initiative creates and disseminates impactful social media content aimed at empowering Canadians to make informed decisions and choices. Scientifically accurate, timely and shareable content will continue to be made available on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Tik Tok. Content is curated in both English (#ScienceUpFirst) and French (#LaSciencedAbord) and is scientifically backed and vetted by subject experts.

The team strives for all content produced to be diverse and inclusive and it will continue to be accessible, highly graphically designed, with text written at a grade six reading level. The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord initiative will also continue to improve content accessibility for individuals with vision and/or hearing impairments, aiming to meet the highest standards of diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility (DIEA).

In addition, the initiative co-creates content and experiences with organizations who serve Indigenous, South Asian and Black communities to address community-identified misinformation needs. For example, the initiative supported 7 community organisations to co-create in person culturally appropriate community events that used a sharing circle format and focused on addressing specific community health misinformation needs of Indigenous, Black, South Asian and LGBTQ2iA+ communities.

2. Continue expansion beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address high priority areas for Canadians (e.g. mental health and addictions, climate action and health).

From the start, in 2021/2022, ScienceUpFirst was focussed exclusively on tackling misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines. From mid 2022 to early 2023, the initiative started to expand into other health topics (e.g. mental health, women's health), and has conducted preliminary audience research and content testing to prepare for expanding the focus to address other high priority issues affecting the health of Canadians such as addictions and climate change. Moving forward, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is strategically positioned to develop a robust plan to expand into these topics areas, which includes assessing lessons learned from past vaccine misinformation campaigns and identifying areas of improvement that occurred during the growth of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord's current platform. Using audience research, a national communications plan and campaign will be developed to highlight expansion into broader areas of health and climate change misinformation.

3. Continue to grow a robust national network of partner organizations.

The next phase of the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord initiative will leverage the extraordinary existing platform (See Appendix I), which is supported by three distinct partner networks:

- **The Executive Advisory Committee:** A dedicated Advisory Committee, composed of internationally recognized scholars from a range of Canadian universities, an Indigenous research lab, media organizations, and science communication

companies, will help to inform the strategic direction of the program. Continued expansion of the Executive Advisory Committee is planned to reflect expanding content areas.

- **The National Coalition of Experts:** A national network of experts including notable researchers, scientists and healthcare experts from across Canada in various healthcare fields will vet and amplify all content. Experts working at the intersections of health and climate change will be added to the Coalition of Experts.
- **The Organizational and Community Partnerships:**
ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard's partnership model in which community and organizational partners from across Canada help identify local community needs, direct efforts, and amplify reach. The platform currently has over 20 partners including Agence Science Presse, BC CDC – Indigenous Community Resources, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Lotus STEMM, South Asian Health Network, Children's Healthcare Canada and CIHR and American Association for the Advancement of Science. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard plans to continue expanding community and organizational partnerships across Canada, building a national capacity for addressing health misinformation with timely, science backed, relevant content.

It is important to recognize the collective strength of the individuals and community partners that support this initiative and the knowledge and skills they contribute. Partners include: Environment Climate Change Canada, Public Health Agency, Canadian Senate, BC CDC - Indigenous Community Resources, Women's Health Research Institute, STEMCell, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Lotus STEMM, Morning Star Lodge, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, Refugee 613, CASC members, Council of Canadian Academies, Science Everywhere, South Asian Health Network, Agence Science Presse, Children's Healthcare Canada, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Solutions for Kids in Pain (SKIP), University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Alberta.

Several academics involved, for example, have been exploring issues associated with health and science mis and disinformation for many years (e.g., myself, Jonathan Jarry, Shazma Mithani, Heidi Tworek, Katherine Smart, Joe Schwarcz, Tania Bubela, Ubaka Ogbogu, etc.). The interdisciplinary nature and expertise of the platform ensures content created is evidence based, comprehensively informed, and responsive to diverse needs. Lastly, the individuals and organisations involved in this initiative have the reputations and networks to further grow and develop ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard.

In the coming year maximising audience reach and building capacity to tackle misinformation across our audiences and partners will be a priority as the initiative grows. Specifically, expansion of organizational and community partnerships across Canada will be a key focus, as will efforts made to grow the National Coalition of Experts to support content creation addressing misinformation in other areas of health. The Executive Advisory Committee will also be expanded to reflect content and platform growth.

Diversity and Inclusion Approach:

CASC is committed to advancing diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility (DIEA). In 2019 CASC developed the 2020-2022 strategic plan that included objectives centered around diversity and inclusion:

- Advancing diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility within the informal science learning sector.

- Addressing Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations within the informal science learning sector.
- Be a platform for inclusive approaches and innovative thinking. Include fresh, new ideas, and perspectives in our events.

In 2021, CASC joined the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion as an Employee Partner to access training opportunities for staff and Board Members. CASC has also worked with various partners (IDEA STEM, Selam Debs Inc, Indigenous Works) to provide accessibility and anti-racism training as well as training to help increase knowledge of Indigenous history, intergenerational issues, and barriers.

CASC has long recognized the need to build greater diversity in the workplace, across our sector and in STEM. Our established strategies, policies and opportunities make the workplace more open to diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility. All CASC staff receive DIEA training opportunities, including webinars and workshops offered through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI). Additionally, CASC staff work directly with researchers who are part of ScienceUpFirst's Coalition of Experts to apply evidence-supported audience research, science communication practices, and engagement strategies.

The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard initiative reflects the values of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility (DIEA) in all content creation, engagements and partnerships. An important focus of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard is connecting to communities disproportionately affected by social media misinformation. Through impactful partnerships, grounded in understanding and trust, the team currently collaborates with Indigenous, South Asian and Black communities to address community-identified misinformation needs. Continued efforts over the coming year will be made to grow organisational partnerships with these communities. Appendix II provides a good example of a recent collaboration tackling misinformation with equity deserving communities across Canada.

To ensure content that is diverse and inclusive, the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard team works closely with DIEA consultants to evaluate content and improve platform accessibility. As an Employer Partner of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and through a working relationships with IDEA-STEM the Canadian Association of Science Centres provides the ScienceUpFirst team with access to cutting edge research and best practices resources and training for hiring a diverse workforce and creating inclusive and equitable workplaces. We also support a Systems Changer in Residence position with Melanie Goodchild, Moose Clan, who is an Anishinaabekwe (Ojibway woman) from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg First Nation and Ketegaunseebee (Garden River) First Nation. She is the founder and former Co-Director of the Turtle Island Institute and she is a Faculty member of the Academy for Systems Change. Her Residency with CASC, will help the ScienceUpFirst initiative build capacity internally and across our network to collaborate at the interface of Indigenous wisdom and Western science.

Part 2: EVIDENCE OF REACH & IMPACT

ScienceUpFirst launched on January 25, 2021 and is currently on **Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok**. A separate feed, LaSciencedAboard, was launched in June, 2021 and features exclusively French content created for Francophone audiences. As of March 31st, 2023 ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard has a loyal and growing audience of over 60,000 individuals. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard has created over 160 pieces of

bilingual content covering 8 distinct campaigns. Content has been shared to a combined audience of over 858 million, and has garnered over 980,000 engagements (i.e., shares, comments, likes). ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord has hosted 16 virtual and 2 in person audience events and has collaborated on 7 community engagements. While simultaneously participating in over 60 knowledge translation opportunities such as conferences, talks and panels. Appendix III provides a detailed description of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord reach and impact in 2023-24.

Using an innovative model built on the power of the initiative's established networks, (see Appendix I) and a process established through iterative testing during the pilot phase (see Appendix IV), the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord team is empowered to quickly mobilize and leverage existing relationships, resources, and research programs to achieve impact. The proven success and impact of the ScienceUpFirst model attracted an additional \$1.85 million in project funding during fiscal 2022/23, greatly leveraging CIHR's 2022/23 funding.

The effectiveness of the ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord content is assessed through formative evaluation. Impact metrics are collected and evaluated weekly, including post engagement, combined audience reach, and number of followers. Adjustments to social media content and strategy are continually made to improve impact. In addition to rigorous quantitative evaluation, an external coalition of experts will continue to meet bi-weekly to evaluate the performance of posts and improve future content. A Coalition of Community partners meets quarterly to evaluate and advise on the progress and impact of community partnerships. A yearly summative evaluation by an external group will measure the performance of social media content and engagements.

Reaching target audiences:

The target audience for ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is the broadest possible audience – the 87% of the general public across Canada who on average exceed 1.5 hours a day of social media use (statista.com). The World Health Organization has noted that, when dealing with vaccine hesitancy, “the general public is your target audience, not the vocal vaccine denier” (WHO, 2017). Within this broad group, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord also aims to:

- Empower equity deserving communities, Indigenous, Black and South Asian communities.
- Specifically address the needs of Quebec and Francophone audiences across Canada and internationally, through the LaSciencedAbord social media channels. Content creation is supported by a Montreal-based French team.
- Actively expand its reach into younger demographics (18-24). Currently, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord reaches a national audience composed of ~66% females and 34% males ranging between 25-54 yrs, fueled with its July launch of TikTok account.

Through partnerships and strategic engagement with social media influencers, ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord continues to grow, gaining followers and expanding into priority demographics.

Addressing broader health and COVID 19 misinformation & strengthening science literacy.

It is critical that Canadians are equipped to make evidence-based decisions to help them build healthier, more resilient futures for themselves and their communities. Yet this ability is increasingly jeopardized by the proliferation of misinformation on social media. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the negative impacts of false information.

A growing number of studies indicate that debunking misinformation on social media is

effective (Caulfield, 2020). Providing credible scientific information through culturally aligned messages and messengers as well as prebunking, aimed at improving people's ability to spot misinformation, are effective in countering misinformation, as shown by research related to climate change (Lewandowsky, 2021; Cook et al., 2017; van der Linden et al., 2017; Lewandowsky & Ecker, 2017) and health (Walter et al., 2020; Basol et al., 2021).

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is an effective platform for debunking and prebunking information related to COVID-19 issues as well as broader areas of health. During 2022-23 the model has expanded content to include topics of mental health, women's health, children's vaccines, nutrition, climate action and climate change health impacts. Its success demonstrates the importance of having a trusted, committed team dedicated to seeking out misinformation and creating relatable content that refutes it.

Part 3: BUDGET

The 2023-24 budget, \$1.5million, will be focused on growing national capacity and expanding reach and impact. 40% of the total budget is allocated to activities that directly reach audiences through community outreach, national campaigns, national awareness and capacity building and knowledge translation activities. 45% of the total budget supports Health Law Institute and CASC personnel, the remaining 15% supports project operational expenses including travel, CASC overhead and materials. Appendix V outlines the full project budget allocations for 2023-24. Appendix VI outlines the project timeframe and milestones. A detailed budget breakdown is provided in Appendix VII. The Budget justification can be found in Appendix VIII and as a separate attachment.

Given the tremendous success of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord since 2021, the initiative was able to leverage 2022-23 CIHR funds to secure an additional \$1.85 million in project support allocated to fiscal 2022-23. This new funding allowed for expansion of activities resulting in increased reach and impact. Remaining 2022-23 CIHR funds (~1.05million) allocated to the SUF team will be used to cover 75% of 2023-24 personnel expenses, the remaining personnel expenses (25%) will be covered by new 2023-24 CIHR funds. Caulfield's team will utilise remaining funds (approx 35%) (~\$55,000) to support current personnel, with those proposed in the 2023-2024 budget to cover the remaining costs of salaries, plus the addition of a .5 FTE Research Associate, a student Research Assistant, and funds to develop methods expertise.

Utilising the remaining 2022-23 funds allows ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord to allocate a significant portion of new 2023-24 funding to projects focused on reaching equity deserving communities, expanding national reach, developing knowledge mobilisation opportunities for researchers and experts and building a national capacity to address misinformation. The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord team continues to actively seek additional long term funding opportunities to expand and grow its mandate and are currently in discussions with a number of potential funding partners (e.g., Fonds de recherche du Québec, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Trottier Family Foundation). Securing funding from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research will not only support the ongoing operations of the initiative during a critical time, but will undoubtedly have an impact on our current and future discussions with other funding agencies in ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord's favour. It is such institutional support that will allow the continued development of a world class platform committed to stopping the proliferation of health misinformation.

ABSTRACT - ScienceUpFirst

The spread of misinformation has emerged as a defining issue of our era. Misinformation can impact an individual's ability to make informed choices about their health. ScienceUpFirst helps provide clarity by providing accessible science-backed information that enables informed decisions that can ultimately result in better health and health outcomes and more informed public discourse.

ScienceUpFirst serves the general public across Canada who on average spend over 2 hours a day on social media. Within this broad group, the initiative aims to (1) engage and co-create content with equity deserving communities, Indigenous, Black and South Asian communities, (2) specifically address the needs of Quebec and Francophone audiences across Canada, (3) expand reach into younger demographics (18-24).

Fueled by a large network of scientists, experts, science communicators, and community partners, ScienceUpFirst combines expert scientific knowledge with social media know-how to create engaging content. Accurate, accessible, timely, and shareable content is shared on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Tik Tok, and increasingly through in-person events. Our approach is grounded in scientifically-backed best practices such as thoughtful debunking strategies, providing credible scientific information through culturally aligned messages and messengers, as well as prebunking, aimed at improving people's ability to spot misinformation.

To date, ScienceUpFirst has been enormously successful and effective in addressing the spread of misinformation (e.g., #ScienceUpFirst and #LaSciencedAbord hashtags have been shared to a combined audience of over 858 million, and have garnered over 980,000 engagements i.e., shares, comments), while simultaneously bridging the gap between the public's needs and scientific expertise. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is strategically positioned to expand more deeply into other areas of health misinformation, such as those related to mental health and climate change.

ScienceUpFirst Budget			
For the period of:		April 1st, 2023- March 31st, 2024	
a) Personnel		Benefits	Total
HLI Staff			
Strategic Oversight - Faculty of Law, Health Law Institute			
Misinformation Expert (HLI)			
CASC Full-time staff			
CEO			
COO			
Membership & Communications Coordinator			
Financial Analyst 1FTE			
Director, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
Manager of Events & Project Management			
Community Engagement Liaison & Science Advisor, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
Communications & Social Media Manager, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
Content Producer - English, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
French Content Lead, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
Story Teller Lead - Science Communicator, ScienceUpFirst initiative			
Total CASC/HLI Full-time staff			556,195
Contractual Administrative Team			
Website Development & Maintenance			
Data Analyst			
HLI Student			
Data Scientist			
Bookkeeper/ Accountant			
Contractual Communications Team			
Social Media Audience Consultant/Strategist			
Community Engagement Liasion			
Media Relations Consultant			
Audience Engagment Specialist			

French Content Creator			
Translation Professional			
Video and Event Production			
Coalition Science Vetting Leads			
Total Contractual Positions			
Subtotal			1,275,408
b) Travel			
Transportation			
Accommodation			
Meals			
Subtotal	65,000		65,000
c) Materials			
Office Supplies			
Project Materials (software subscriptions, website, training)			
Printing/Publication costs/ Photocopying/Postage			
Promotion fees (media, digital)			
Subtotal	119,547		119,547
d) Equipment			
Office Equipment (computers, printer, phone)	5,000		
Subtotal	5,000		5,000
e) Utilities			
Utilities (phone plan)	9,545		
Subtotal	9,545		9,545
h) Other (specify)			
1) Auditor			
2) Insurance			
Subtotal	25,500		25,500
Total Cost of Project			1,500,000

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord Participant Table

Principal Investigator: Timothy Caulfield

Timothy Caulfield is a Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy, a Professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Health, and Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta. His interdisciplinary research on topics like stem cells, genetics, research ethics, the public representations of science and public health policy has allowed him to publish over 360 academic articles. He has won numerous academic and writing awards, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and was recently awarded the Order of Canada. He works intensively with the popular press, writing and providing commentary to a wide range of outlets, has written award-winning popular books, has co-written, co-produced and hosted a hugely successful television series, and along with his team and project collaborators has produced unique public engagement activities, many of which use art to talk about science. Most relevant to this application is the work he and his team have done over the past two decades exploring issues associated with health and science mis and disinformation.

Canadian Association of Science Centres

The Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC), a registered Charity, is Canada's largest science engagement network, collectively engaging over 10 million people each year in accessible, locally relevant STEM learning experiences. CASC's vision is for Canada to have a thriving science and innovation culture of engaged citizens. We do this through our mission to empower a national network of organizations that champion Science and Innovation by making science approachable, relevant, and accessible. CASC represents a network of trusted sources of accurate, credible science and public trust surveys demonstrate that Science Centres rank #1 among Canadians' most trusted sources of reliable scientific information (Ontario Science Centre, 2018). As such, CASC was an ideal organization to lead ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord, a national initiative tackling online misinformation originally envisioned by Senator Stan Kutcher and Professor Timothy Caulfield in the summer of 2020, wherein public trust is essential.

Dr. Marianne Mader, CASC Executive Director, has over 15 years of not-for-profit experience as a Co-Founder, Managing Director, and Executive Director, managing teams and collaborating at the intersection of academic, industrial, governmental, and community stakeholders. Her strengths in strategic planning, creative thinking, design, and implementation of funding programs, and partnership development have enabled innovative initiatives in the formal and informal science education sectors. She is a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society College, a member of the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference, and received a US Antarctic Service Medal.

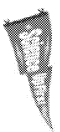
Knowledge Users

ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord reaches a national audience that is ~66% female and 34% male, ranging between 25-54 yrs. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord has an engaged following of over 64,000 individuals located in urban and rural centres across Canada. ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord is building collaborative partnerships with Indigenous, Black and South Asian communities and supporting knowledge translation at post-secondary institutions including the University of Alberta, University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University

Appendix

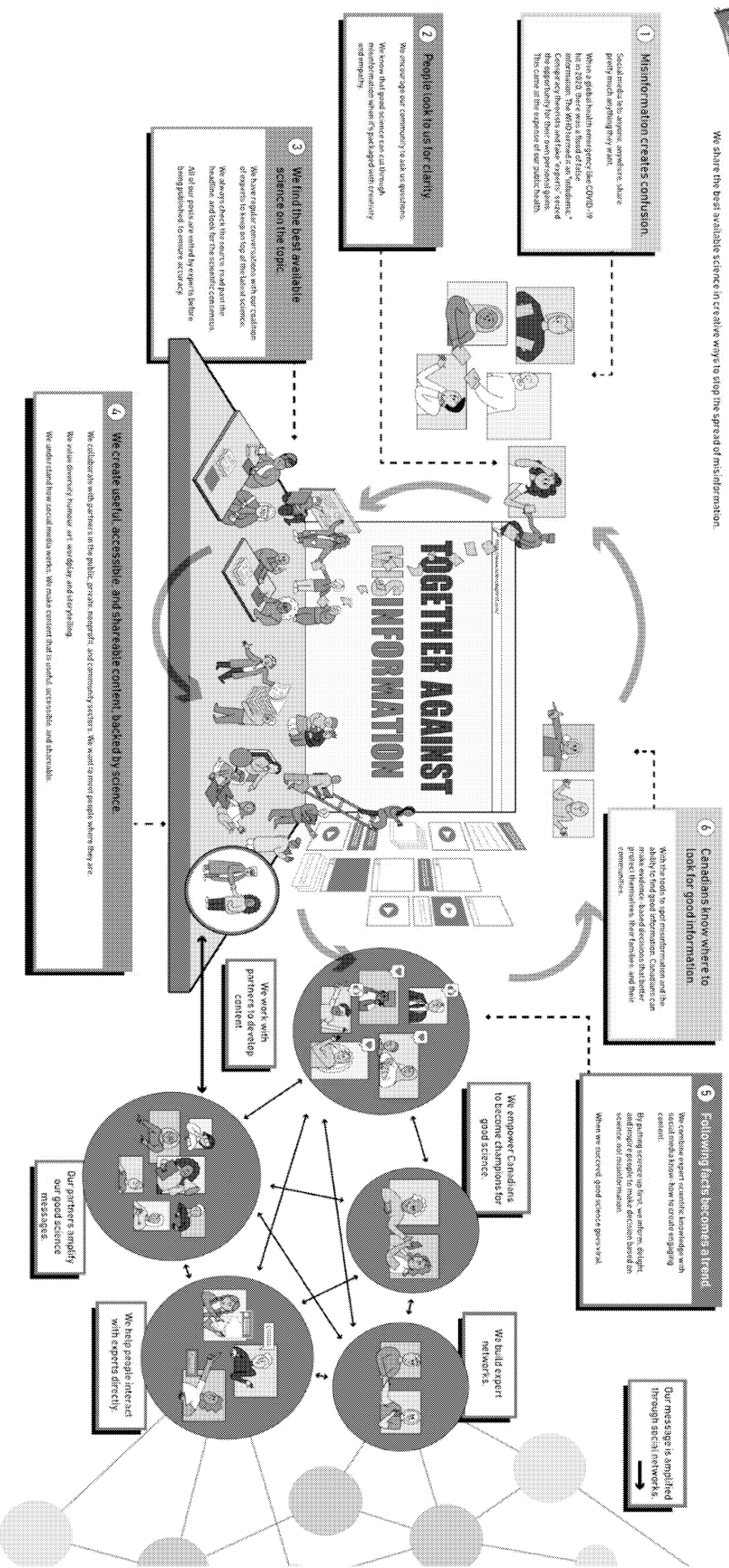
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Appendix V: ScienceUpFirst 2023-24 Project Budget	8
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APPENDIX I: ScienceUpFirst Model



TOGETHER AGAINST MISINFORMATION

We share the best available science in creative ways to stop the spread of misinformation.



APPENDIX II: Community Grant Media Releases



Sault's Entomica joins campaign to address misinformation

CTV News | Northern Ontario

Full story available at [CTV News Northern Ontario](#)



Science North supporting newcomers with community health connections

[sudbury.com](#)

Full story available at [Sudbury.com](#)

APPENDIX III: ScienceUpFirst Reach and Impact

Objective 1: Address misinformation in a timely and accessible way.

- Metrics: # of posts, audience engagement, equity deserving community engagements

2022/23 impact results:

- 160 bilingual pieces of content (infographics, messages, videos) have been shared
- Shared to a combined audience of over 850 million social media accounts since launch, an additional combined audience of 316 million since March 2022.
- ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard has a dedicated audience of over 64,000 individuals with a greater than 90% retention rate at 3 and 6 months.
- Leading to over 9,805,000 engagements (shares, comments, likes, etc.) since launch an additional 345,000 engagements since March 2022.
- 15 virtual conversations (CoffeeUpFirst) including four conversations in French. On average each CoffeeUpFirst conversation reaches ~240 individuals.
- Hosted one virtual bilingual town hall event focused on addressing questions related to childhood vaccinations, 5 expert panellists participated, 273 registrants and an additional 92 views of the recording as of May 8, 2023
- 2 In-person events with live stream elements.
 - Knowledge mobilisation symposium (Montreal, QC): 75 in-person participants (scientists, experts and science communicators) and 140 online participants. 17 Francophone and Anglophone speakers covering various topics around misinformation and sharing best practices.
 - Womens Health Panel Discussion (Vancouver, BC): 200 in-person participants (Canadian public) and over 1600 registrants (international audience) over 2400 views of the recording as of May 8, 2023
- Reached equity deserving communities across Canada by supporting 7 community organisations to develop in person community events (eg. sharing circles) focused on addressing specific community health misinformation needs. Reached over 600 individuals in Indigenous, Black, South Asian and LGBTQ2iA+ communities.

Objective 2: Expand beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address other high priority areas for Canadians

- Metrics collected: # of campaigns addressing key topics
- 2022/23/22 impact results: Eight campaigns focused on:
 - **Misinformer tactics:** Educating the public on key misinformer tactics employed on social media.
 - **Women's Health:** Addressing misinformation related to hormone health.
 - **Kids and Vaccines** campaign: Partnered with Children's Healthcare Canada on a second national day to draw focus on the importances of childhood vaccines (272 registrants with over 730 views of the recording)
 - **Vaccines Boosters:** Engaged 8 diverse content creators (fr/en) in an online campaign focused on addressing misinformation related to vaccine boosters (171 pieces of content with over 13.4 million impressions)
 - **Mental Health:** Created online content throughout the year.

- **Nutrition:** Created online content throughout the year.
- **Vitamins and supplements:** Created online content throughout the year.
- **Climate action:** Tested online content and introduced elements of climate action into in person and virtual engagements.

Objective 3: Continue to grow a robust national network of partner organizations.

- Metrics collected: # of Coalition members, # of national partners, # community partner organizations, # knowledge mobilisation engagements.
- 2022/23 impact results:
 - Grew national coalition of over 100 scientists and other experts to vet content and share posts.
 - Grew a network of over 25 national partners to help amplify content
 - Established working relationships with seven (7) community partner organisations, reaching over 600 individuals from Indigenous, Black and South Asian communities.
 - Knowledge mobilisation, sharing best practices for addressing misinformation with Science Communicators (experts, students, researchers)
 - French misinformation symposium (75 in person attendees, 140 virtual)
 - Misinformation communication training for Community partners (7 community organisations)
- Participated in over 60 conferences, panels and speaking opportunities including: COP15, CSPC 2022.



**We are creating a movement
against misinformation in Canada.**



Since our launch on January 25, 2021...

**#ScienceUpFirst/#LaSciencedAboard have
been shared to a combined audience of**

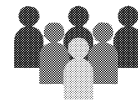
858 million+

Leading to over

**980,400
engagements**



Our 64,000+ followers are:

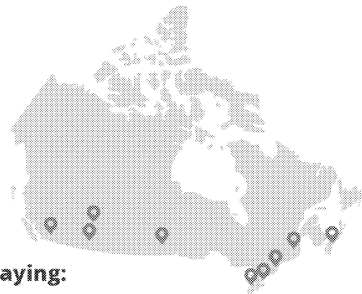


Engaged Canadians seeking the best available science.

2/3 women

1/3 men

From coast to coast to coast.



What people are saying:

"This is so helpful thank you. Recently I heard people talking about this and other topics you've covered recently and I knew to come here to get the real information"



"There is so much misinformation on the internet, particularly about vaccines, so tools like this are helpful."



"This is a terrific account to follow. Academics fighting covid misinformation. Share, share, share ♥"



**To expand our reach and ensure our content is both scientifically
accurate and culturally relevant, we partner with:**

Government



Academia



Not for Profits



National Campaigns



Community Initiatives



APPENDIX IV: ScienceUpFirst Process

THE PROCESS IN ACTION:



APPENDIX V: ScienceUpFirst 2023-24 Project Budget

Budget Item	Cost	Comments
Personnel	\$772,908	Supporting: -9 FTE (25%) -3.33 FTE -15+ contract positions
Knowledge Translation	\$40,500	Creation of 3-4 knowledge translation opportunities (in person & virtual workshops): -event logistics -honorariums and speaker fees
Community Outreach	\$125,000	Addressing Misinformation needs of equity deserving communities: -community event logistics -honorariums and speaker fees -systems change through Indigenous lens residency
National Audience Engagement	\$72,000	National campaigns in French and English (in person & virtual): -event logistics -honorariums and speaker fees
National Capacity Building and Awareness	\$265,000	National Campaign <i>Together Against Misinformation</i> : 1. National knowledge translation symposium -event logistics -honorariums and speaker fees 2. Equity deserving community outreach (3-5 locations) -community event logistics -honorariums and speaker fees 3. National audience outreach (3-5 locations) -event logistics -honorariums and speaker

Budget Item	Cost	Comments
		fees
Travel	\$65,000	-Eligible travel costs
Materials	\$119,547	-Office materials -Project materials, software subscriptions, training. -Printing/photocopy and postage -Promotional fees (for all campaigns)
Equipment	\$5,000	-Computers, printers and related hardware
Utilities	\$9,545	-Cellular phone plan
Other	\$25,500	-Year end audit -Project insurance

APPENDIX VI: ScienceUpFirst Work Plan

(March 2023 - March 2024): Addressing Health Misinformation, Supporting COVID19 Transition, and Building National Capacity \$1.5 million

Social Media Content

- Creating 150+ social media posts in English and French, averaging 3 unique posts per week. Posting on all major social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok
- Continue to address misinformation during the transition between pandemic and endemic (~25%), expanding content to address misinformation related to key health areas including women's health, climate impacts on health and mental health and addictions.
- Expand the coalition of experts to support content creation addressing misinformation in key health areas and climate change.
- Expand the Executive Advisory Committee to reflect the content and platform expansion.
- Build communications plan focused on COVID content support, broader areas of health and knowledge mobilisation. Reaching a national audience and equity deserving communities.
 - Conduct national audience research focused on the communication needs of equity deserving communities, Black, Indigenous and South Asian communities.
- Work with DIEA consultants to ensure all ScienceUpFirst/ LaSceincedAbord content meets diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility best practices.
- Hire and onboarding of key team members to support platform expansion.

Community Partnerships

- Continue to foster partnerships with BIPOC communities, focusing on building national partnerships with Indigenous communities, South Asian and Black communities.
 - Building national partnerships with Indigenous communities.
- Continue to build a national network of community leaders and experts.
- Empowering communities through community-led collaborations
- Collaborate on the creation of 4-8 community-led engagements focusing on specific areas of misinformation. Ex: virtual town halls, community events
- Initiate audience research focused on exploring the communication needs, motivation and barriers of equity deserving communities, Indigenous, Black and South Asian.
- Build a community of practice focused on implementing organisational systems change through an Indigenous lens, enabling authentic engagement with Indigenous communities.

National Reach

- Plan a National Campaign focused on addressing misinformation, "*Together Against Misinformation Week*". Collaborate with national and community partners to reach audiences in all regions of Canada.
- Continue to grow the national partnership network to reflect expanded content scope.

- Work collaboratively with partner organisations to amplify content and promote ScienceUpFirst and the movement against misinformation in new and unique ways
- ex. partnerships with local science outreach organisations.
- Collaborate with national partners on 1-2 major campaigns to combat misinformation in specific subject areas ex. mental health week, women's health, environmental sustainability.

Knowledge Mobilisation

- Continue to participate in national and international conferences, seminars and media opportunities to share the ScienceUpFirst model and best practices for addressing misinformation.
- Partner with national and community organisations to create 2-4 workshops focused on addressing specific health misinformation needs.
- Share communications resources and highlight partner expertise on ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard website and in newsletters.
- Share audience research findings with partner organisations, funders and policy makers.

APPENDIX VIII: Budget Justification

University of Alberta Health Law Institute Employees: \$190,630

- **1.50 FTE Research Associate:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for data collection, analyses and KT activities associated with misinformation research
- **Executive Director (HLI):** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for managing project reporting, administration of funds, and assistance with development of research and KT activities
- [REDACTED]
- **Student Research Assistant (HLI):** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for assisting with data collection, analyses and KT activities associated with misinformation research

Health Law Institute Contract Positions: [REDACTED]

- **Data Scientist:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for the development and analysis of data sets. Budgeted for [REDACTED]

Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) Employees: \$371,065

- **Chief Executive Officer:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for supporting strategic direction, project sustainability, and connectivity to the national network of informal science engagement
- **Chief Operations Officer:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for assistance with financial support of SUF and human resource management
- **Membership and Communications Coordinator:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for the development of Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility guidelines and programs.
- **Manager of Events & Project Management:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for project management and assistance with event planning and engagement coordination
- **Financial Analyst:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for financial project management and supporting financial reporting.
- **Director, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for supporting strategic direction, project sustainability, platform growth and national partnership development
- **Community Engagement Liaison & Science Advisor, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]
 - Responsible for developing community partnerships and engagement strategy
 - Provide scientific guidance in relation to health-related topics
- **Communications and Social Media Manager, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]

- Responsible for leading the team of content creators/science communicators and building ScienceUpFirst content strategy, platform growth and national partnership development

- **French Content Lead, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]

- Responsible for French supports the development of the French content strategy and leads the implementation of the French content strategy

- **English Content Producer, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]

- Responsible for English content creation

- **Story-Teller Lead, ScienceUpFirst initiative:** [REDACTED]

- Responsible for developing all story elements for content creation

- [REDACTED]

ScienceUpFirst Contract Positions \$710,713

- **Website development and maintenance:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- **Data analyst:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- **Accountant/Bookkeeper** [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED], externally engaged consultant KPMG responsible for project expenses.

- **Social Media Audience Consultant:** [REDACTED]

- Audience research consultants conducting quantitative and qualitative audience research with equity deserving communities (Indigenous, Black, South Asian)

- **Community Engagement Consultant:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- **Media Relations Consultant:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- **Audience Engagement Consultant:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Audience engagement consultant is a key liaison between SUF and audience members, answers audience questions & identifies community partnerships opportunities.

- **French Content Creator:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Responsible for creation/adaptation of content addressing needs of French audience.

- **Translation Professional:** [REDACTED]

- Including live event translation billed per event;

[REDACTED]

• **Coalition & Science Vetting:** [REDACTED]

• **Development of Campaign Events: \$502,500**

- 1) National *"Together Against Misinformation"* Week (\$265,000)
 - a) Community engagements: supporting ~ 3-5 national events with equity deserving communities, event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums
 - b) National engagements: supporting ~ 3-5 events across Canada, supporting event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums
 - c) National Knowledge Translation Symposium : supporting event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums.
- 2) **Addressing Health Misinformation Campaigns** (\$72,000)
 - a) French: supporting 1-2 Francophone audience engagements including event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums
 - b) English: 1-2 national audience engagements (English with translation) including event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums.
- 3) **Equity Deserving Community Engagements** (\$125,000)
 - a) Community engagement: Supporting 2-3 community led collaborations addressing misinformation needs of equity deserving groups. Including event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums
 - b) Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Accessibility (DIEA) Community of Practice - Engaging expert contractors to lead organizational systems change and building of the DIEA community of practice.
- 4) **Knowledge Translation** (\$40,500)
 - a) 3-4 workshops (virtual or in person): supporting event logistics, speaker fees and honorariums.

Travel: \$65,000

- \$65,000 budgeted to cover the travel, accommodation and meal costs of CASC/HLI/SUF team members to attend, present and promote SUF research at invited events.

Materials: \$119,547

- Office supplies: [REDACTED]
- Project Materials: [REDACTED] to cover software subscription costs (e.g. [REDACTED]) and potential short courses (e.g. data visualization course) to develop methods expertise of HLI Misinformation experts.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Printing, photocopying, postage: [REDACTED]
- Publication costs: [REDACTED] to cover the costs associated with peer reviewed publications
- Promotion fees (media, digital) [REDACTED] Supporting national promotional activities for *"Together Against Misinformation"* week, KT workshops, audience engagements (Fr&En) and national promotion activities of SUF content. Projections based on 2022-23 promotional expenditures.

Equipment: \$5,000

- Funds requested will be used to support hardware needs of staff

Utilities: \$9,545

- Funds requested will be used to support the cellular phone plans of full time CASC staff

Other: \$25,500

- Auditor: [REDACTED] to support year end audit, based on the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- Insurance Costs: [REDACTED] to cover project insurance, based on 2022-23 fiscal year.

APPENDIX VIII: References

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**Pages 162 to / à 176
are withheld pursuant to section
sont retenues en vertu de l'article**

19(1)

**of the Access to Information Act
de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information**



Signature of Institution Paid

Institution Paid Signature	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the statements "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms" as outlined in the CIHR Grants and Awards Guide, apply to any grant or award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the applicant's institution or the applicant(s) employing Institution(s).</p> <p>A signature is not required at institutions outside of Canada.</p> <p>If both your Program and submitting institution are using the Electronic Approval Tool on ResearchNet, a signature is not required for block 1 if the Authorized Official can bind the institution to all obligations outlined in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms". If the Authorized Official cannot bind the institution to all obligations in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms", complete block 2.</p>	
1. Signature of Authorized Official:	
Print Name: Denise Baker Research Facilitation Support Administrator	Date: 23 May 2023
Signature:  X	
2. If the Authorized Official above cannot bind the institution to all obligations outlined in the "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms", please provide additional signatures below as required.	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	


Signature of Research Institution

Institution Signature at Primary Location of Research (Awards Programs Only)	
<p>It is agreed that the general conditions governing Grants and Awards, as well as the statements "Meaning of Signatures on Application Forms for the Authorized Official at the Primary Location of Research" (http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#1-G3) as outlined in the CIHR Grants and Awards Guide, apply to any award made pursuant to this application and are hereby accepted by the Nominated Principal Applicant's institution where the research is to be conducted.</p>	
Signature of Authorized Official:	
Print Name:	Date:
Signature: X	

DC0190GP

Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

Notice of Decision / Avis de décision

Application Number/Numéro de la demande: 

Committee Code/Code du comité: SUF

Applicants/Candidates: Prof. Timothy A. Caulfield

Dr. Marianne M. Mader

With/Avec:

Institution paid/ University of Alberta


Title/Titre: Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation Science Up First/LaSciencedAboard

Primary Inst./


Inst. principal:

Other Related Inst./

Autres inst. connexes:

Competition Outcome/Résultats du concours:	Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation / LaSciencedAboard : Ensemble contre la désinformation
	May/Mai 25, 2023
Number in competition/Nbre de demandes dans le concours:	
Number approved in the competition /	
Nombre de demandes approuvées dans le concours:	

Decision on your application/	Approved / Approuvée
Décision sur votre demande:	
Total Funding Amount:/	\$1,500,000
Montant total du financement:	
Term/Durée:	1 yrs/ans 0 months/mois

Peer Review Committee Recommendation, for your information and use/	
Recommandation du comité d'examen par les pairs, pour fins d'information et d'utilisation:	
Committee/Comité:	Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation / French: LaSciencedAboard : Ensemble contre la désinformation
Application rank within the competition/	
Rang de la demande dans ce concours:	
Percent Rank Within the Competition/	
Rang en pourcentage au sein du concours:	
Rating/	

This document is for information only. Official payment is stated on the CIHR Authorization for Funding.
Document à titre d'information seulement. Le paiement officiel est indiqué sur l'autorisation de financement des IRSC.

Title of funding opportunity

DEVELOPMENT MILESTONE	TARGET DEADLINE*
BN to SCIO	February 28, 2023
BN to President for approval	March 22, 2023
SL submits FCF to finance	March 27, 2023
SL submits FO description and objectives to PDD (if applicable)	March 1, 2023
Partnerships and/or SL secures Intent to Partner (if applicable)	NA
SL/Partner(s) and PDD finalize FO text (if applicable)	March 15, 2023
PDD sends FO for approvals (Manager, Finance and DG) (if applicable)	March 17, 2023
FO and launch materials submitted to FOM (if applicable)	March 31, 2023
Provide advance copy to NPA via email (from Support email address)	April 11, 2023
Launch date (if applicable)	May 12, 2023
Application deadline	May 25, 2023
Eligibility & processing by CC	May 30, 2023
Conflict and ability to review assessment (if applicable)	May 31, 2023
Release Assignment / send email to Reviewers	May 31 – June 1, 2023
Memorandum of Understanding / Collaborative Agreement signed (if applicable)	NA
Peer review (if applicable)	June 21, 2023
E-vote BN and financial template for approvals (manager, Finance, DG)	June 23-29, 2023
E-vote BN sent to Governance	June 30, 2023
Prepare results documents	
Notice of Decision	July 20, 2023
Funding start date	July 1, 2023

Commented [TJ(1)]: Provide to PDD for Manager and DG approval, and finance, by Feb 10

Commented [TJ(2)]: Marka off week of 13-17

Commented [TJ(3)]: Or sooner, must be post FOM QA

Commented [CM(4)]: We will not do full peer review. Can't we do an administrative review since it's bridge funding?

Commented [TJ(5R4)]: For other Administrative Internal systems we did hold a meeting to allow for discussion.

Commented [CA(6R4)]: Regardless of internal or external review, there will still be a discussion/meeting

Timelines - Science Up First Funding Opportunity

Date		
February 23, 2022		
February 24, 2022	Launch BN sent to Adrian	
February 25, 2022	Launch BN sent for approval - Dalia	
February 26, 2022		
February 27, 2022		
February 28, 2022	Launch BN sent for approval - Tammy Launch BN sent for approval - President	Endorsed by all on Monday
March 1, 2022	Funding Opportunity sent to NPA	
March 2, 2022	Recruit reviewers and share list of Participants (from SUF website) for COIs	
March 3, 2022		
March 4, 2022	Application Deadline for NPI	5:00 PM
March 5, 2022		
March 6, 2022		
March 7, 2022	Eligibility and Processing Release Assignment (Send application and related documents)	Morning By Noon
March 8, 2022		
March 9, 2022		
March 10, 2022	Review Deadline Peer Review Meeting	Noon 3:00 p.m
March 11, 2022		
March 12, 2022		
March 13, 2022		
March 14, 2022	Enter scores in EIS, prepare BN, FT Circulate the BN and FT for approvals	
March 15, 2022	eVote BN submitted to Governance	Ask for deadline of March 17
March 16, 2022		
March 17, 2022	Receie approved eVote BN	
March 18, 2022	Notice of Decision / Send AFF to Finance	
March 19, 2022		
March 20, 2022		


March 18, 2022

Review / Evaluation

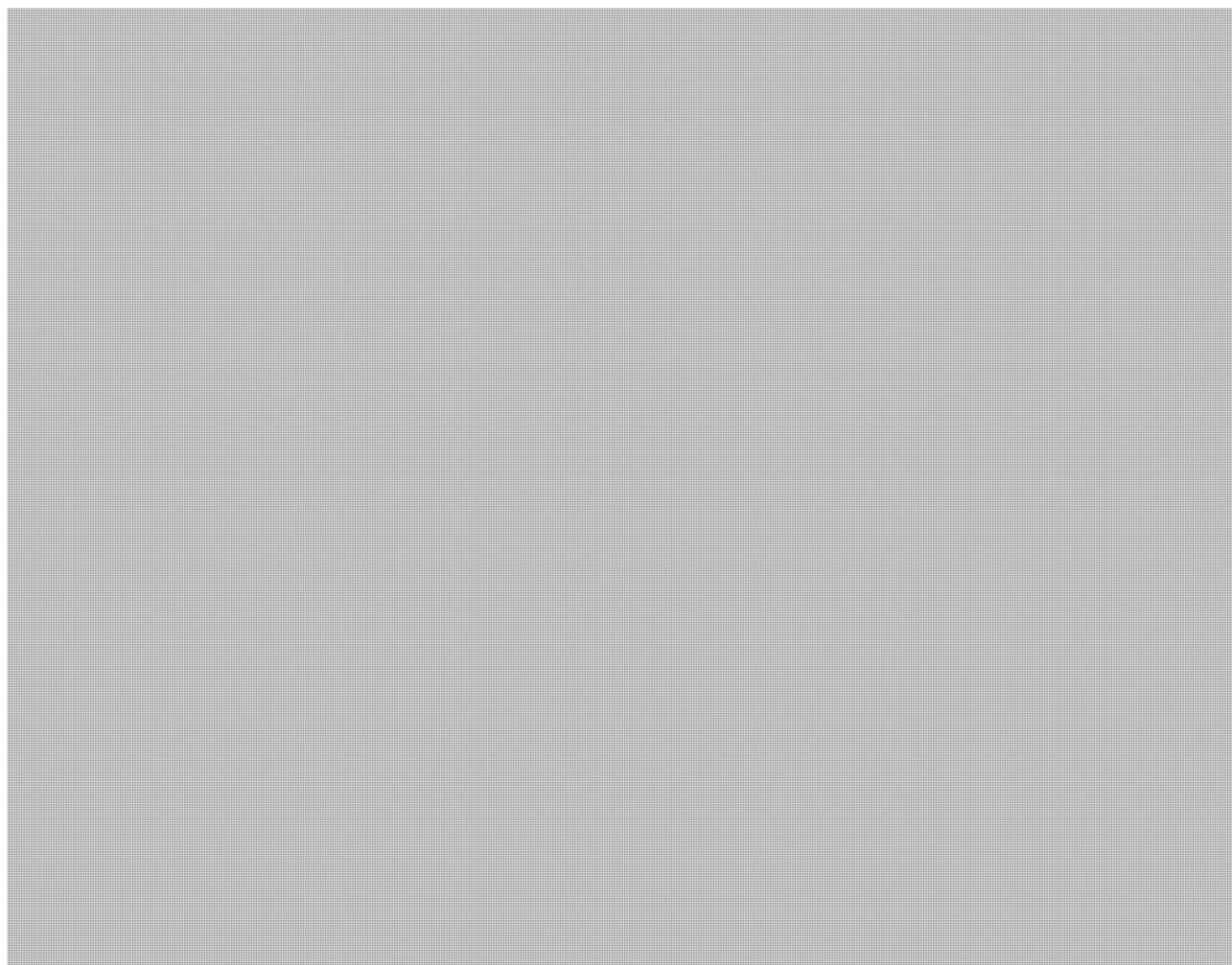
**Operating Grant : Science Up First /
Subvention de fonctionnement : La science d'abord**

Nominated Principal Applicant / Candidat principal désigné: Tim Caulfield

Project Title / Titre du project: Science Up First

Overall Score / Cote finale: 

Written Evaluations / Evaluations écrites



**Pages 182 to / à 185
are withheld pursuant to sections
sont retenues en vertu des articles**

19(1), 20(1)(b)

**of the Access to Information Act
de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information**

ScienceUpFirst 2023-24 Budget (\$1.5 million)

- Core Program (staff, contractors, platform operations) ~\$1.35 million

Deliverables:

- Content creation and amplification across social media channels and website. (En/Fr)
- Community collaborations with Indigenous, Black and South Asian groups. Limited to free or community funded activities.
- Limited online training opportunities (limited by platform costs)
- Building network capacity through organizational partnerships.
- Supporting misinformation research through data and expertise sharing.

- Capacity Building (training, community of practice) ~\$75,000

Deliverables:

- Science Communicator training: 2-3 training opportunities En & Fr (virtual or in person/hybrid)
- Supporting science communicators with access to the ScienceUpFirst content creation process, social media platforms and community of practice.
- Growing a science communications community of practice in En & Fr

- Knowledge Mobilization (audience reach) \$75,000

Deliverables:

- Growing national audience reach, utilizing limited online marketing channels.
- Expand national audience reach and engagement.
- Host 2 audience campaigns (ex townhall or workshops) in En & Fr.
- Equity Seeking group engagement. Build and expand internal capacity and relationships with equity seeking communities across Canada. Developing 2-3 community led collaborations addressing community identified health misinformation needs.


July 20, 2023

Review / Evaluation

**Operating Grant: Science Up First /
Subvention de fonctionnement : La science d'abord**

Nominated Principal Applicant / Candidat principal désigné: Tim Caulfield

Project Title / Titre du project: Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation

Final Overall Mean / Cote moyenne finale: 

Final Written Evaluations / Evaluations écrites finales



**Pages 188 to / à 191
are withheld pursuant to sections
sont retenues en vertu des articles**

19(1), 20(1)(b)

**of the Access to Information Act
de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information**



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For Discussion

Extension of ScienceUpFirst: Together Against Misinformation

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is to seek Subcommittee on Implementation and Oversight (SCIO)'s input on extending the funding for ScienceUpFirst: Together Against Misinformation (SUF), for one-year for a total investment of up to \$1.5M in fiscal year 2023-24 from the CRPPHE budget.

Please note that this item was brought to SCIO on November 29, 2022. The BN has been updated to highlight how the points raised at the last meeting have been addressed, as well as noting that in response to SCIO feedback the recommendation has changed from a renewal of an expanded scope of work, to an extension to support already approved work funding for an additional year as detailed furthermore in Appendix B: Response to SCIO Summary of Discussion.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that SCIO provides input on extending SUF, for one year, for a CIHR investment of up to \$1.5M in FY 2023-24 for final recommendation for CIHR President as per approvals for decisions of this nature in a pandemic period.

Background and Justification

Background – About SUF

The need to combat misinformation and build national knowledge mobilization capacity to address and prevent future health emergencies was the impetus to create the novel science communication platform SUF. The initiative is housed in the Canadian Association of Science Centers (CASC), a registered Charity, and operates with its own advisory board. The Nominated Principal Investigator received \$1.75 million through a PHAC Immunization Partnership Fund contribution agreement. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) provided project funding of \$1.5M for one year to support operations between February 2022 and February 2023. The specific objectives of this funding opportunity were to:

- Address misinformation in a timely and accessible way, creating a bridge between the public need for credible information and scientific expertise;
- Expand beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address high priority areas for Canadians (e.g., mental health and addictions, climate action and health); and
- Continue to grow a robust national network of partner organizations.

Fueled by a large network of scientists, researchers, professionals, science communicators, and community partners SUF provides the knowledge and tools Canadians need to separate evidence from misinformation, resulting in better health and health outcomes. In 2022, SUF conducted a national audience research study to better understand science misinformation needs of Canadians and the positioning of SUF. Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used and the key findings were that Canadians continue to struggle to find clarity in the current information landscape and



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they want information from trusted sources. These results suggest there is still a need for the work that SUF is doing. Although currently focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines, SUF is strategically positioned to address the misinformation needs of Canadians and expand into other areas relevant to the current context including, but not limited to, science communication focused on vaccine hesitancy, mental health and addictions. SUF creates timely and accessible content based on the best available research, real-time social listening data and input from a coalition of experts.

Additional considerations – the broader COVID platform/network discussion and sustainability: Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, CIHR and other federal funders have supported the creation and scaling of COVID-19 platforms/networks. We currently do not have a thorough understanding of what has been funded in the pandemic preparedness and response research ecosystem. Before making decisions about long-term renewal or cessation of funding platforms/network, the CRPPHE in collaboration with the other federal partners will undertake an inventory and ecosystem analysis of federally funded COVID-19 platforms / networks / major projects to inform a broader investment strategy. Understanding that this exercise will take several months, the CRPPHE will consider providing extensions to platforms that are seen to be continuing to contribute to the COVID-19 response to ensure sustainability in the short-term while these analyses are completed. In the case of SUF, this extension will also provide time for the team to secure additional funding.

Impact of SUF to date

SUF continuously measures impact using a series of metrics related to reach and engagement.

Although SUF does not currently have funds to engage in longitudinal research studies since its launch, SUF has been collecting both quantitative (i.e., reach, engagement, retention, hashtag use and audience size) and qualitative data (i.e., audience feedback both on social channels and from events, audience demographics as well as network growth, composition and reach) related to communications performance and impact, which can be used as a baseline for future longitudinal studies. This data has been used to evaluate performance and to implement iterative improvements across all audience engagements (social media posts and events). Audience engagement on social media platforms is a measure of connection and interaction with content, and a good way of inferring channel impact.

SUF has established and continues to grow a robust national network of partner organizations to help amplify content and to ensure maximum reach and impact and is currently working with over 20 national partner organizations across Canada. Media coverage (radio, print and TV) of SUF has been valued at over \$1.5 million. SUF is currently on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. To date, SUF has been shared to a combined audience of over 690 million social media accounts, and has garnered over 800,000 engagements (shares, comments, likes, etc.). SUF engagement metrics (below) indicate a strong level of engagement by users and those who access their communications products. SUF also has a very high audience retention rate of 90%. A retention rate is reflective of the percentage of existing followers who remain followers after a given period (usually calculated by a tracking software).



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The table below shows SUF comparisons for the three platforms based on industry standards and highlighting that it has met or exceeded industry standards for a good engagement rate.¹

Platform	ScienceUpFirst Engagement Rate	LaSciencedAbord Engagement Rate	Industry Standard Engagement Rate *
Instagram	4.1%	1.7%	3%
Twitter	2.1%	2.7%	2%
Facebook	6.4%	2.9%	1%

* Industry standards sourced from Adobe Express, Your guide to social media engagement rates.

In terms of engagement, SUF reaches a national audience composed of ~66% female and 34% male ranging between the ages of 25 and 54 and is actively expanding reach into younger demographics (18-24) with the July 2021 launch of TikTok.

Engaging priority populations

Through partnerships and strategic engagement with social media influencers, SUF continues to grow followers and expand into priority demographics. An integral part of the SUF model is the connection to communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 through impactful partnerships, grounded in understanding and trust. For example, SUF has partnered with Morning Star Lodge and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata to amplify Indigenous content, and is working with Lotus STEMM to create accessible, translated materials for South Asian communities. In addition, SUF has established partnerships with Black, Indigenous, South Asian and Hispanic communities, with a focus on creating accessible translated content. To best address the needs of Quebec audiences, LaSciencedAbord was launched as a separate feed in June 2021. Its Montreal-based French content creation team was able to create relevant and timely content for their audience in Quebec and Francophone peoples across Canada and internationally.

In addition to media content, SUF also works directly with knowledge mobilization partners such as the Gairdner Foundation and Simon Fraser University to develop and deliver science communication workshops and engage researchers and scientists at all levels of content creation and amplification.

Justification of directed grant mechanism

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and there is an ongoing need for timely and responsive pro-science communications, SUF is seeking an urgent funding extension from the CRPPHE to bridge the team and support current operations (due to the depletion of existing funding) for one additional year, while the team waits on the outcome of other

¹ The engagement rate reflects the total engagements a post received divided by the total number of impressions on that post. This is usually expressed as a percentage. For example: a Facebook post that gets 1000 views and 100 engagements has a 10% engagement rate. That's because (100 engagements / 1000 views) x 100 = 10%.



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funding requests from sources other than CIHR including the application to the Strategic Science Fund through Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) (details below in the sustainability plan section). This will support the maintenance of the current platform and its ability to continue to meet the communication needs of Canadians as the pandemic evolves and challenges continue to arise related to health misinformation and effective knowledge mobilization.

SUF is the only platform and network of its kind in Canada. As such, directly relevant comparative data to support the success of the program is not available. This is a uniquely positioned network to address and debunk misinformation in a timely and accessible way, creating a bridge between the public need for credible information and scientific expertise. The SUF model combines evidence-based messaging with strategic content amplification across various social media platforms. SUF harnesses the power of networks including scientists, researchers, health experts, community leaders, partner organizations and the public. This collaborative approach results in creative, accessible, and timely science backed content, responding to current needs and emerging misinformation.

Current funding

- SUF was able to leverage CIHR funding to attract additional project funds from the PHAC-Immunization Partnership Fund (IPF) and Environment Climate Change Canada (ECCC). All additional project funds amplified current campaigns and enabled greater reach and impact. Focus on collaborations supporting equity deserving communities. Note: All project funds are to be used by March 31, 2023.
 - IPF: \$750,000 support for addressing booster vaccine misinformation.
 - ECCC: \$1 million to support the development of infrastructure to support environmental content creation.
- SUF has used ~\$1.1 million of the \$1.5 million funding provided by CIHR in 2022-23, ~\$400,000 remaining until March 31, 2023.
- Operational cost from December 2022 to March 2023 is being covered by funding provided by ECCC. The remaining ~\$400,000 of CIHR operational funding will be repurposed for misinformation audience research focused on equity deserving audiences, Indigenous, Black, and South Asian communities.

Sustainability Plan

- The CASC has applied to ISED for a 5-year funding under the Strategic Science Fund (SSF). Notification of outcomes is anticipated by April 2023. If successful, the SSF funding would support SUF operations from 2024-2029.
- SUF is currently working with ECCC to explore future funding mechanisms for environmental content.

Budget ask justification

To support continuous operations of SUF while the team is attempting to secure additional funding, the CRPPHE proposes offering a one-year directed grant investment from the CRPPHE budget of up to \$1.5M, beginning in FY 2023. In accordance with the Use of Grant Funds section of the Tri-Agency (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) Guide on Financial Administration, funds will be used to support:



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- Core Program (staff, contractors, platform operations) ~\$1.35 M
Deliverables:
 - Content creation and amplification across social media channels and website in English and French.
 - Community collaborations with Indigenous, Black and South Asian groups. Limited to free or community funded activities.
 - Limited online training opportunities (limited by platform costs).
 - Building network capacity through organizational partnerships.
 - Supporting misinformation research through data and expertise sharing.
- Capacity Building (training, community of practice) ~\$75,000
Deliverables:
 - Science Communicator training: 2-3 training opportunities in English and French (virtual or in person/hybrid).
 - Supporting science communicators with access to the SUF content creation process, social media platforms and community of practice.
 - Growing a science communications community of practice in English and French.
- Knowledge Mobilization (audience reach) ~ \$75,000
Deliverables:
 - Growing national audience reach, utilizing limited online marketing channels.
 - Expanding national audience reach and engagement.
 - Hosting 2 audience campaigns (i.e., townhall or workshops) in English and French.
 - Equity Seeking group engagement. Build and expand internal capacity and relationships with equity seeking communities across Canada. Developing 2-3 community led collaborations addressing community identified health misinformation needs.

Key Considerations

- This directed grant aligns with the majority of the priorities found within the CIHR Strategic Plan 2021-2031:
 - Priority B: Strengthen Canadian Health Research Capacity by supporting the Government of Canada's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Priority D: Pursue Health Equity through Research by funding research that will lead to healthier communities that enjoy a good quality of life and are better able to cope with health emergencies.
 - Priority E: Integrate Evidence in Health Decisions through strengthening our efforts in the evolving field of knowledge mobilization and focus on moving evidence into Canadian health systems to maximize results amongst researchers and knowledge users, including patients, the public, policymakers, clinicians, and other stakeholders.



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Resource implications and overall operational feasibility

Financial

The total funding amount available for this directed grant is up to \$1.5M in 2023-24. The cost will be borne from the CRPPHE budget as follows:

Source of Funds	2023-24
CRPPHE	\$1,500,000
Total	\$ 1,500,000

Overall Assessment of Operational Feasibility

Delivering this extension has been determined to be feasible by the Associate-Vice President of Research Programs. It will be delivered by program design and delivery. Given that this is an extension of an existing grant, an administrative review will be conducted following CIHR's best practices for administrative review.

Specifically, the administrative review will assess:

- the appropriateness of activities against the objectives of the additional funding.
- the appropriateness of the budget against the proposed activities and timelines.
- If applicable, consideration of the amount of leftover funds available in a potential recipient's account.

The key expected dates are included in Appendix A. The expedited timelines are considered appropriate given the rapid response required. Any delays in launch will have corresponding delays for all other steps, but timelines will remain relative.

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest have been declared.

Next Steps

- President approval: Following the discussion with SCIO, the Extension of Science Up First: Together Against Misinformation will be presented to the President for approval in accordance with the Presidential direction process for approvals for decisions of this nature in a pandemic period.

Attachment(s)

- Appendix A: Funding Opportunity Development and Competition Delivery Timelines.
- Appendix B: Response to SCIO Summary of Discussion.

Approval Section (may be hidden by the Governance Secretariat)

Governance will return the BN to sender if this section is not duly completed and dated confirming that appropriate reviews and approvals have been sought.

Prepared by: Siham Yasari, Associate-CRPPHE, Marisa Creatore, Executive Director-CRPPHE



xxth Meeting of the Subcommittee on Implementation and Oversight (SCIO)
Month, Date, Year

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In consultation with: _____

Reviewed and approved by Finance: Benoit Lauzon, Financial Advisor

Reviewed and approved by Program Design and Delivery: Jan Torrents, a/Lead-Program Design and Delivery, Alison Chayka, a/Manager-Program Design and Delivery and Paula Kirton, Director General-Program Design and Delivery

Approved by a member of SCIO or SC: Rhonda Kropp, a/Vice-President, Research, Learning Health Systems.

Date: February 16, 2023



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Appendix A: Funding Opportunity Development and Competition Delivery Timelines

Title of funding opportunity

DEVELOPMENT MILESTONE	TARGET DEADLINE*
BN to SCIO	February 28, 2023
BN to CIHR President for decision	March 22, 2023
SL submits FCF to finance	March 27, 2023
SL submits FO description and objectives to PDD (if applicable)	March 1, 2023
Partnerships and/or SL secures Intent to Partner (if applicable)	NA
SL/Partner(s) and PDD finalize FO text (if applicable)	March 15, 2023
PDD sends FO for approvals (Manager, Finance and DG) (if applicable)	March 17, 2023
FO and launch materials submitted to FOM (if applicable)	March 31, 2023
Launch date (if applicable)	May 12, 2023
Application deadline	May 26, 2023
Eligibility & processing by CC	May 30, 2023
Conflict and ability to review assessment (if applicable)	May 31, 2023
Memorandum of Understanding / Collaborative Agreement signed (if applicable)	NA
Peer review (if applicable)	June 21, 2023
E-vote BN and financial template for approvals (manager, Finance, DG)	June 23-29, 2023
E-vote BN sent to Governance	June 30, 2023
Prepare results documents	
Notice of Decision	July 20, 2023
Funding start date	July 1, 2023

*If there is a delay with any step, there is a cascade effect on the remaining steps. The timeline will need to be revisited and may need to be revised accordingly.

Abbreviations

BN	Briefing Note
CC	Contact Center
DG	Director General
FCF	Funding Commitment Form
FO	Funding Opportunity
FOM	Funding Opportunity Management team
PDD	Program Design and Delivery
SCIO	Subcommittee on Implementation and Oversight
SC	Science Council
SL	Strategic Lead(s)



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Appendix B: Response to SCIO Summary of Discussion

Key points and comments of SCIO member discussion, as provided to the Strategic Leads:

- The committee raised concerns about the use of directed grants, as these grants exclude thousands of researchers, including those who have been historically excluded such as women and racialized communities.
- Additional information on verifying and detailing the impact of this work is required to determine if these programs and networks are making a difference. The lead noted that applicants must provide an up-to-date report on the metrics of their work and detail the events and workshops that may have taken place in addition to social media impact.
- This work has been developed with community engagement, including Indigenous communities and South Asian communities.
- Further work needs to be completed to ensure that these networks can retain their infrastructure while recognizing that CIHR may no longer continue with the high initial level of investment provided in response to the pandemic.
- The peer review criteria will be examined during the development phase of the FO that will be completed by PDD, noting that with a directed grant it is a process of due diligence rather than a competitive process. For further clarifications, the guidelines for Directed Grants will be recirculated to the committee.
- After the lead left the meeting, the committee mentioned that they are concerned that the extension of directed grants limits the accessibility of these funding opportunities to so many researchers, especially considering this directed grant has already supported 2 years of funding. In addition to this concern, this committee requested clearer rationale for the directed grant route.
- It was noted that these programs must begin to be self-sustaining with external funding moving forward. A detailed plan on sustainability would be appreciated. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to ask the programs what timeline and funding support they anticipate needing as they seek and confirm external funding.
- The proposed sum of the funding must be clarified as to why it is increasing rather than decreasing in this third year. The committee mentioned that the current rationale is not sufficient and that the increase in funds raises concern.
- The committee restated that they wish to have more detailed and clear measures and metrics of the impact of this work. A more concrete assessment of the impact of an audience of 690 million social media accounts and 800 000 engagements would clarify the influence that this may have on the community.

Strategic Lead response:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond with revised materials. Given the length and complexity of the revised BN, below is a brief summary of the key changes:

- 1) **The use of the directed grant mechanism:** Additional details have been added to the justification of the directed grant mechanism section in addition to the added section entitled "additional considerations" in the background piece to outline the need to extend this grant to ensure sustainability in the short term while research team seeks



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to secure additional and external funding and while CRPPHE with other federal funders will be advancing work to understand the federally funded ecosystem in the area of COVID-19 platforms and networks and to analyze opportunity cost of not extending these platforms including SUF.

- 2) **Impact of the first grant:** A new section entitled “Impact of SUF to date” has been added after the Background section, outlining qualitative and quantitative methods used and limitations faced by the team to continuously analyze impact. This section provides bench marking data comparing SUF engagement rate to industry standards. An assessment of impact through first CIHR investment and potential for continued impact in this proposed extension will be built in the evaluation criteria of the review process.
- 3) **Sustainability Plan:** Two new sections entitled “current Funding” and “sustainability plan” have been added following the “justification of directed grant mechanism” paragraph shedding more light on the current budget reality of SUF, as well as additional funds leveraged during the course of CIHR grants. The section describes ongoing applications for future funding. For example, the application to Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) for a 5-year funding under the Strategic Science Fund (SSF). If successful SSF funding would support SUF operations from 2024-2029.
- 4) **Budget:** More details has been added to the BN in the newly named section “budget ask justification” after the “sustainability plan” section. This addition provides more details on rationale and anticipated allocation of funds if granted.
The motion was amended as requested by SCIO members to reflect “up to \$1.5M”
- 5) **Administrative review:** The appropriate due diligence will be built into the funding opportunity and the administrative review process. This includes a financial review and recruitment of the internal CIHR staff (outside of PDD and the CRPPHE) with the expertise required to review the application.

Ponsen, Rachael (CIHR/IRSC)

From: Mota, Adrian (CIHR/IRSC)
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:55 PM
To: Viehbeck, Sarah (CIHR/IRSC); Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC)
Cc: Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC); Dunn, Erin (CIHR/IRSC); Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC)
Subject: RE: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

From: Viehbeck, Sarah (CIHR/IRSC) <Sarah.Viehbeck@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:54 PM
To: Mota, Adrian (CIHR/IRSC) <Adrian.Mota@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC) <Tammy.Clifford@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Wereley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Dunn, Erin (CIHR/IRSC) <Erin.Dunn@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC) <Steven.Mitchell@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

From: Mota, Adrian (CIHR/IRSC) <Adrian.Mota@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:50 PM
To: Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC) <Tammy.Clifford@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Viehbeck, Sarah (CIHR/IRSC) <Sarah.Viehbeck@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Wereley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Dunn, Erin (CIHR/IRSC) <Erin.Dunn@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC) <Steven.Mitchell@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

So directed grant?

From: Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC) <Tammy.Clifford@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:40 PM
To: Mota, Adrian (CIHR/IRSC) <Adrian.Mota@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Viehbeck, Sarah (CIHR/IRSC) <Sarah.Viehbeck@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Wereley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Dunn, Erin (CIHR/IRSC) <Erin.Dunn@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC) <Steven.Mitchell@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: FW: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

FYI – let's look to see what \$\$ we can allocate to this (MCM3, Centre, both).

From: Strong, Michael (CIHR/IRSC) <Michael.Strong@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:38 PM

To: Cefaloni, Christina (CIHR/IRSC) <Christina.Cefaloni@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC) <Tammy.Clifford@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

Hello, I have copied Tammy as well since she was going to have a look at the MCM3 funds as well. And I enjoyed the musings....definitely the right questions.

Cheers

Mike

From: Cefaloni, Christina (CIHR/IRSC) <Christina.Cefaloni@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: February 14, 2022 11:07 AM
To: Strong, Michael (CIHR/IRSC) <Michael.Strong@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: FW: no response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

Hi Mike

I was not involved in your meeting this am and perhaps you discussed options for SUF. I wanted to flag to you the input I received from Allison Forsyth as she is living and breathing Science Comms right now and she has done lots of work with SUF as one of our partners. She is also well versed in the G&A space from her previous CIHR positions. These are just her musings (and she has a great sense of humour) But I thought it might help as you were considering options....

C

From: Forsythe, Allison (CIHR/IRSC) <Allison.Forsythe@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 9:57 AM
To: Cefaloni, Christina (CIHR/IRSC) <Christina.Cefaloni@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Nemesvary, Jackie (CIHR/IRSC) <Jackie.Nemesvary@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: nor response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

Good morning,

If there are G/A funds available from the pandemic centre this FY, they could do a directed grant to ScienceUpFirst if there's time (see other comments below). Surely it would be "aligned with the mandate of the Centre" while the group is still focused on COVID-19,

As a side note,

HC/PHAC may already feel that they have contributed to SUF via the Immunization Partnership Fund grant Tim mentioned below, especially if those grants are not renewable, but Mike's suggestion to find additional partners is a good one. CIHR would likely become the lead [REDACTED] (could be collaborative agreements involved for co-funding or transferring money for CIHR to administer, for example), and there would likely still be a directed grant mechanism involved. It has been a while since I've seen a directed grant up close, but I believe there still needs to be a funding opportunity (posted on ResearchNet for transparency), as well as an application that gets peer reviewed. That said, it's probably quicker than it sounds – but it does take some (human) resources and would require a strategic lead to stick-handle the process.

Otherwise, I don't think there are any other grant options available at the moment on ResearchNet – and certainly not something that would lead to any funding immediately, unless they're willing to take just \$25K for now from the President's Fund (assuming there's any money left in it this FY).

Based on my adventures with procurement so far, I also can't think of any contract options that would be speedy. [REDACTED]

I hope this helps! I'll let you know if I get any other brilliant ideas when the coffee kicks in.

Thanks,
Allison

From: Cefaloni, Christina (CIHR/IRSC) <Christina.Cefaloni@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2022 11:23 PM
To: Forsythe, Allison (CIHR/IRSC) <Allison.Forsythe@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Nemesvary, Jackie (CIHR/IRSC) <Jackie.Nemesvary@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: FW: nor response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

Hi Allison

Just thought we should chat as perhaps you have some ideas where Sarah or Adrian could do some creative funding opps.

C

From: Strong, Michael (CIHR/IRSC) <Michael.Strong@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2022 1:12 PM
To: Cefaloni, Christina (CIHR/IRSC) <Christina.Cefaloni@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Sylvain, Christian (CIHR/IRSC) <Christian.Sylvain@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Morcos Fraser, Dalia (CIHR/IRSC) <Dalia.MorcosFraser@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: nor response needed today - FW: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

Hi folks, I am going to raise this briefly tomorrow to get your thoughts. I wonder (once we actually get a firm defensible budget) whether it might be worth considering a coalition of the willing to help out – HC, PHAC, SSRC, ISED. In the meantime, I also gave them a lead to Shopify.

Cheers

Mike

From: Tim Caulfield <caulfield@ualberta.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 4:08 PM
To: Strong, Michael (CIHR/IRSC) <Michael.Strong@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Magda Byma <magda@scienceupfirst.com>; Marianne Mader <mader@casc-accs.com>
Subject: Funding advice for #ScienceUpFirst

*****Caution** – email originated from outside of CIHR. **Read the warning below / Attention** – Ce courriel provient de l'extérieur des IRSC. **Voir la mise en garde ci-dessous*****

Hi Michael,

Hope all well! It would be nice to cross paths F2F in near future! ☺

Forgive me for emailing you directly about this issue, but our (really amazingly successful!!) science communication initiative, ScienceUpFirst (SUF), is in urgent need of bridge funding.

Below are a few bullet points from my colleagues at SUF, but the bottom line is that without funds we fear we won't be able to continue our efforts at this critical time.

Do you have any suggestions or options from the perspective of the CIHR? We are hopeful that we can obtain more funding in the future (perhaps by mid summer), but in a tough spot right now.

I've cc'd Magda Byma, Director of SUF, and Marianne Mader, founder and ED with CASC.

I know you are insanely busy, so appreciate any thoughts or suggestions you might have.

All the best,

Tim

- ScienceUpFirst, the only proven national platform for debunking online misinformation, is nearing the end of it's 2021-22 PHAC-IPF funding (March 31, 2022) and is **urgently seeking emergency bridge funding to continue operations prior to securing long term operational funding**. Current discussion with multiple funding partners point to strong potential for extended support.
- ScienceUpFirst requires \$100,000/month to support current operations and impact. Seeking a 2-3 month extension (\$200-300K)
- ScienceUpFirst launched on January 25, 2021 and is currently on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. To date #ScienceUpFirst has a reach of over **510 million accounts**, and has garnered over **600,000 engagements** (shares, comments, likes, etc.). The ScienceUpFirst was built with a strategic vision to expand beyond COVID-19 misinformation to address high priority areas for Canadians (e.g. mental health and addictions, climate action and health).
- ScienceUpFirst is the only proven national platform for debunking misinformation, bringing together scientists, subject experts, science communicators, community and national partners, to create best in class science content in both English and French. With national reach, strong partnerships with BIPOC communities and

custom Francophone content, ScienceUpFirst bridges the gap between the public's information needs and scientific expertise.

Timothy Caulfield, LLM, FRSC, FCAHS
Canada Research Chair in Health Law & Policy
Professor, Faculty of Law and School of Public Health
Research Director, Health Law Institute, University of Alberta

Twitter: [@CaulfieldTim](https://twitter.com/CaulfieldTim)

<https://www.ualberta.ca/law/faculty-and-research/health-law-institute/people/timothycaulfield.html>

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Ponsen, Rachael (CIHR/IRSC)

From: Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC)
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2022 1:09 PM
To: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC)
Cc: Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC); Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC); Dragon, Stephane (CIHR/IRSC); Dagenais, Pam (CIHR/IRSC)
Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL: Science Up First - Exceptional Approval to Launch BN

Many thanks, Melanie. I'm pleased to provide my approval to route to the President for final sign-off.

Have a great afternoon.

Tammy

From: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2022 5:03 PM
To: Clifford, Tammy (CIHR/IRSC) <Tammy.Clifford@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Mitchell, Steven (CIHR/IRSC) <Steven.Mitchell@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Wereley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Dragon, Stephane (CIHR/IRSC) <Stephane.Dragon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: FW: FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL: Science Up First - Exceptional Approval to Launch BN

Good afternoon Tammy,

Please find below for your review and approval the Approval to Launch Briefing Note and Appendices for the Exceptional funding approval of the Science Up First Directed Grant.

If you could provide your review/approval by end of day on Monday, February 28, to allow us to then send to the President Tuesday for final endorsement.

Approval to Launch BN - SUF.doc (<http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32067292>)

Appendix A - KVD Infographic (<http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32105170>)

Appendix B - BN Science Up First - Together Against Misinformation
(<http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32106039>)

Appendix C - Letter to Deputy Prime-Minister Freeland
(<http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32103221>)

Appendix D – on page 5 of the Briefing Note

Here is the link to the [routing slip](#) for your signature.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend.

Melanie

Mélanie Brûlé

Lead / Program Design and Delivery Branch
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Government of Canada
melanie.brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca / Cell : 613-808-3423

Chef / Direction de la Conception et exécution des programmes
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
melanie.brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca / Cell : 613-808-3423

(she/her – elle/elle)

CIHR – Discoveries for life / IRSC – Découvertes pour la vie

From: Morcos Fraser, Dalia (CIHR/IRSC) <Dalia.MorcosFraser@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2022 4:44 PM
To: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Wereley, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Wereley@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Gareau, Sylvie (CIHR/IRSC) <Sylvie.Gareau@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW/APPROVAL: Science Up First - Exceptional Approval to Launch BN

I approve

Thanks
Dalia

Dalia Morcos Fraser, CPA, CMA (she/her – elle)

Chief Financial Officer
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
dalia.morcosfraser@cihr-irsc.gc.ca | 613-808-7675

Dirigeante principale des finances
Instituts de recherche en sante du Canada
dalia.morcosfraser@cihr-irsc.gc.ca | 613-808-7675

Ponsen, Rachael (CIHR/IRSC)

From: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 11:54 AM
To: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science up First

My pleasure, anytime.

Mélanie Brûlé

Lead / Program Design and Delivery Branch
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Government of Canada
melanie.brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca / Cell : 613-808-3423

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CIHR – Discoveries for life / IRSC – Découvertes pour la vie

From: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 11:16 AM
To: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science up First

Thanks Mel.

FYI – this is to respond to a few questions from C. Baron. [REDACTED]

This helps us to clarify the history.

P

From: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 9:22 AM

To: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Science up First

Not a problem Paula. Here is the information requested, I realize now that none of the reviewers were on the previous panel, both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], were on another one of my panels, but not this one, sorry for that.

Evaluation criteria for this current extension:

To support the strategic objectives of this funding opportunity, the following evaluation criteria will be used:

1. Proposal:
 - a. Extent to which the application builds upon the existing Science Up First platform and appropriateness of activities against the objectives of the additional funding;
 - b. Clear description of the research team's continued commitment to engaging a diversity of members, in particular related to how they will address **team composition and recruitment processes, research environment, training activities, and/or knowledge translation activities**, as applicable;
 - c. Strength of sustainability plan outlining steps to secure external funding moving forward; and
 - d. Clearly defined plan to continue measuring impact of the work.
2. Budget:
 - a. Appropriateness of the budget related to the proposed activities and timelines including the contextualization of how this funding builds on the existing ScienceUpFirst platform.

Previous Extension - Science Up First FO/Process:

- **Reviewers:**
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- The process for the evaluation of this application was similar to the current one, where three internal reviewers reviewed the extension, of the grant first funded by PHAC. This is a very rapid process, done in under 3 weeks, between receipt of application and NOD.
- Context from this grant:
 - The Nominated Principal Investigator of the grant entitled “ScienceUpFirst: Together Against Misinformation” received \$1.75 million through a PHAC Immunization Partnership Fund contribution agreement which is coming to an end at the completion of this fiscal year (March 31, 2022). The initiative is housed in the Canadian Association of Science Centers, a registered Charity, and operates with its own advisory board.
 - There is great potential to leverage the \$1.75 million start-up investment in ScienceUpFirst which aimed to develop and pilot the program from Dec 2020 - March 2022 received from the Immunization Partnership Fund, PHAC, to grow the current platform and networks and apply the model to combat misinformation related to various areas of health and climate action. ScienceUpFirst is seeking emergency bridge funding for up to \$1.5 million to support current operations (due to the depletion of existing funding), and an extension of support for up to an additional one year, while long term funding is secured (from sources other than CIHR).
- Previous Approval to Launch BN, sought directly through the President as part of an expedited process.
<http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32067292>

- FO: <https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/vwOpprtntyDtIs.do?prog=3653&view=currentOpps&org=CIHR&type=EXACT&resultCount=25&sort=program&all=1&masterList=true>
- [Evaluation Criteria](#)

Hope this helps, let me know if you need more information.
Mel

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[CIHR – Discoveries for life / IRSC – Découvertes pour la vie](#)

From: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 8:57 AM
To: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science up First

Thanks Mel,

A couple more questions – sorry.

Can you share the review criteria?

Can you confirm that this had a full scientific review when this was reviewed the very first time?


P

From: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 8:23 AM
To: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science up First

Good morning Paula,

The Science Up First review process was completed on June 21 with the one-hour review meeting. The process included an administrative review by three internal to CIHR [REDACTED], two of which had also reviewed the previous SUF extension. The process was labeled as an Administrative Review by Alison, because the application was not reviewed by "Peers". [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The eVote BN is now with Governance (since July 7), with the aim of releasing the decision by tomorrow. You reviewed this eVote BN on July 7.

Final score: 

Reviewers:

- 
- 
- 

Letter Text:

Please let me know if you require additional information.

Mel

Mélanie Brûlé

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CIHR – Discoveries for life / IRSC – Découvertes pour la vie

From: Kirton, Paula (CIHR/IRSC) <Paula.Kirton@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 7:53 AM
To: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: Science up First
Importance: High

Hi Mel,

I think you are still the Lead on this one. Can you tell me about the Science Up First peer review? I went back to the BN and found the piece below which outlines the admin review being planned. Can you tell me where we are at in the process? Who the reviewers will be? Who reviewed this last time?

Anything else you think important?

Given that this is an extension of an existing grant, an administrative review will be conducted following CIHR's best practices for administrative review.

Specifically, the administrative review will assess:

- the appropriateness of activities against the objectives of the additional funding.
- the appropriateness of the budget against the proposed activities and timelines.

- If applicable, consideration of the amount of leftover funds available in a potential recipient's account.

Paula

Paula Kirton
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Ponsen, Rachael (CIHR/IRSC)

From: Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 9:18 AM

To: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Cc: Lauzon, Benoit (CIHR/IRSC) <Benoit.Lauzon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Desbois, Kim (CIHR/IRSC) <Kim.Desbois@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Science Up First Extension

Importance: High

Good morning again,

Please find below additional content on the application's current review and FO process. The facts that Alison shared in her email regarding the previous FO are correct, the previous funding was part of the TT's rapid-response and delivered through a very rapid competition, for which the launch sought approval directly from the President. The competition delivery took place in under three weeks.

I will be on vacation as of tomorrow (and so is Kim), given that the NOD is Thursday, July 20, I would have hoped to have been able to help my (new) staff release this decision, which is being done by email, before I leave for my short vacation. **Would it be possible to get a definite answer on this today, to help me prepare and seek help from another Lead, if needed.**

Relating to the previous FO:

-
-

Current FO/Process:

-
-
- The team addresses all three objectives clearly in the proposal,
- The final scored is a
-
-

Reviewer comments (reviewers collated reviews):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

From application -

The 2023-24 budget, \$1.5million, will be focused on growing national capacity and expanding reach and impact. 40% of the total budget is allocated to activities that directly reach audiences through community outreach, national campaigns, national awareness and capacity building and knowledge translation activities. 45% of the total budget supports Health Law Institute and CASC personnel, the remaining 15% supports project operational expenses including travel, CASC overhead and materials. Appendix V outlines the full project budget allocations for 2023-24. Appendix VI outlines the project timeframe and milestones. A detailed budget breakdown is provided in Appendix VII. The Budget justification can be found in Appendix VIII and as a separate attachment.

Given the tremendous success of ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAbord since 2021, the initiative was able to leverage 2022-23 CIHR funds to secure an additional \$1.85 million in project support allocated to fiscal 2022-23. This new funding allowed for expansion of activities resulting in increased reach and impact. Remaining 2022-23 CIHR funds (~1.05million) allocated to the SUF team will be used to cover 75% of 2023-24 personnel expenses, the remaining personnel expenses

(25%) will be covered by new 2023-24 CIHR funds. Caulfield's team will utilise remaining funds (approx 35%) (~\$55,000) to support current personnel, with those proposed in the 2023-2024 budget to cover the remaining costs of salaries, plus the addition of a .5 FTE Research Associate, a student Research Assistant, and funds to develop methods expertise.

Utilising the remaining 2022-23 funds allows ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard to allocate a significant portion of new 2023-24 funding to projects focused on reaching equity deserving communities, expanding national reach, developing knowledge mobilisation opportunities for researchers and experts and building a national capacity to address misinformation. The ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard team continues to actively seek additional long term funding opportunities to expand and grow its mandate and are currently in discussions with a number of potential funding partners (e.g., Fonds de recherche du Québec, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Trottier Family Foundation). Securing funding from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research will not only support the ongoing operations of the initiative during a critical time, but will undoubtedly have an impact on our current and future discussions with other funding agencies in ScienceUpFirst/LaSciencedAboard's favour. It is such institutional support that will allow the continued development of a world class platform committed to stopping the proliferation of health misinformation

Other mentions of [REDACTED] :

○

○

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you require additional information.
Mel

Mélanie Brûlé

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melanie.brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca / Cell : 613-808-3423

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CIHR – Discoveries for life / IRSC – Découvertes pour la vie

From: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 7:44 AM

To: Chayka, Alison (CIHR/IRSC) <Alison.Chayka@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Cc: Lauzon, Benoit (CIHR/IRSC) <Benoit.Lauzon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Science Up First Extension

Thanks Alison, very helpful. Now it's starting to come back to me (tiger team activities) 😊.

From: Chayka, Alison (CIHR/IRSC) <Alison.Chayka@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 6:09 PM
To: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Lauzon, Benoit (CIHR/IRSC) <Benoit.Lauzon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>; Brule, Melanie (CIHR/IRSC) <Melanie.Brule@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science Up First Extension

Forgot to cc Melanie 😊

From: Chayka, Alison (CIHR/IRSC)
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 6:09 PM
To: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Lauzon, Benoit (CIHR/IRSC) <Benoit.Lauzon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Science Up First Extension

Hi Tyrone,

I am copying Melanie Brule as she is the PDD Lead overseeing this competition [REDACTED]

With respect to the latter question, the NPI received \$1.75 million in 2021 through a PHAC Immunization Partnership Fund contribution agreement. CIHR did fund a directed grant supplement in 2021-2022 and was delivered by the Tiger Team. Approvals to launch were received via an expedited process bypassing SCIO/SC. The BN for the approval to launch can be found here: <http://infonet.internal.cihr.ca/OTCS/llisapi.dll/link/32125117>

I hope this is helpful,
Alison

Alison Chayka

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alison.chayka@irsc-cihr.gc.ca / Tel: 613-790-0630

From: Rueter, Tyrone (CIHR/IRSC) <Tyrone.Rueter@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 4:52 PM
To: Chayka, Alison (CIHR/IRSC) <Alison.Chayka@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Cc: Lauzon, Benoit (CIHR/IRSC) <Benoit.Lauzon@cihr-irsc.gc.ca>
Subject: Science Up First Extension

Hi Alison,

Hope you are doing well. [REDACTED]

Also, do you have any information off the top of your head as far as why this platform was approved as a directed grant back in 2021-22?

Thanks,
Tyrone