CMA Communities of Interest Grants - Criteria and Guidelines

Background

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is introducing a CMA Communities of Interest Grants program. The goal is to enable groups of members to foster and grow communities in ways that are authentic and applicable to the medical community, and to enable existing communities to expand in scale and scope.

Recent research with CMA members indicates that 47% of those surveyed currently collaborate with various formal and informal groups or communities to address health-system, patient or professional issues. Members also told us the three factors most important to the success of their communities are resources (financial and staff), dedicated time and collaboration. Close to half of the remaining members surveyed said they would probably participate in a community if it were easily accessible, and addressed a health issue of importance.

Through its Communities of Interest Grants program, the CMA will help provide the support and resources members need to do this work. This program, launched in 2018, is currently being run on a trial basis and will be evaluated and adapted in future years.

Grant details

The CMA Communities of Interest Grants program will award up to four (4) grants of up to $5,000 each and one (1) grant of up to $10,000 per year to CMA member applicants to support communities working collaboratively to address issues affecting the health care system, the profession and/or patients. In addition to funding, the CMA will provide grant recipients with strategic advice, community management coaching and communications support – at the CMA’s discretion – to support the community.

A community of interest may apply for and receive grants for multiple years, provided the community meets the requirements of the grant application for each year for which it applies for funding. The number of grants and requirements may change from year to year.

Application criteria

To apply for a CMA Communities of Interest Grant, the physician or medical learner sponsor will be required to submit an application that meets the following criteria:

- it must be submitted by a CMA member in good standing;
- it must be co-sponsored by no less than five CMA member physicians and/or medical learners;
- it must clearly identify the scope of the issue(s) the community will address; and
- it must be fully completed and submitted by the application deadline.

The submission must also demonstrate the following details:

1. **Objectives**: A clear statement of the objectives and desired outcomes of the community.
2. **Strategy**: An overview of the strategic approach the community will undertake to achieve the objectives and how grant funding will support this strategy
3. **Community leadership**: An overview of the community’s leaders (and co-sponsors), their diversity in terms of speciality, geographic location and demographics, and the roles these leaders will play within the community
4. **Recruitment**: An overview of the communications and engagement approach the community will employ to build awareness and participation in the community among relevant stakeholders.

5. **Budget**: A detailed plan of how the grant will be allocated to support the community’s strategy, objectives and scalability.

**Selection criteria**

The application will be ranked by a selection committee made up of physician and medical learners, in accordance with the following criteria:

1. **Inclusion (25%)**
   Applicants should demonstrate how they will include diverse perspectives within their community of interest and ensure diversity of their physician and medical learner participants in terms of practice stage, speciality and geography. Applicants should articulate how they will include non-physician stakeholders within the community, as applicable.

2. **Impact (25%)**
   Applicants should demonstrate how their community of interest will benefit the health care system, the profession, and patients.

3. **Relevance (25%)**
   Throughout the application process, applicants should demonstrate how their community of interest will support one or more of the CMA’s strategic objectives:
   - Consistently bringing a patient-centred perspective
   - Engaging in courageous, influential and collaborative dialogue and advocacy
   - Uniting and inspiring physicians on health issues and causes that matter

4. **Strategic approach (25%)**
   Applicants should clearly articulate their community’s objectives and demonstrate how their strategy, leadership, recruitment and budget will support the achievement of these objectives.

**Exceptions**

The CMA will not fund the following:

- Communities of interest whose membership is limited to employees of a single organization or entity (e.g., all participants from one hospital, clinic or association)
- Fundraising events
- Communities of interest that address a topic pertaining to one specific speciality or practice
- Communities of interest where the intent or activity may be discriminatory, defamatory or offensive to the CMA’s members, subsidiaries and staff and/or other members of the medical community
- Communities of interest that may conflict with or impede the fulfillment of the CMA’s mission, values and strategic plan
- Deficit or emergency funding
- Capital campaigns or expenditures such as furniture or computers
- Party-specific political activities and organizations
- Requests related to religious goals

**Requirements and reporting**

Grant recipients will be required to agree in writing to terms and conditions pertaining to the *CMA Communities of Interest Grants* program. Grants awarded in the amount of $5,000 will be provided in full on receipt of the signed terms and conditions document. Grants awarded in the amount of $10,000 will be provided in two
installments: 50% on receipt of the signed terms and conditions document and the remaining 50% six months later, on receipt of a mid-year progress report.

All grant recipients will be required to submit a CMA Communities of Interest Grant report at the conclusion of the one-year term. This report will include details of budget allocation and community metrics and will be a key consideration should the community of interest apply for additional funding in a subsequent year. The summary reports from award recipients will also be one of the elements used to evaluate the success of the grant program.

Role of the CMA

The CMA will play an advisory role for successful grant recipients for the duration of the year for which the grant has been awarded. This advisory role may include advice on online engagement and platform selection, oversight of community management, recommendations for strategic approach and engagement, and evaluation of the community. The CMA’s role will not include tactical execution and administrative support of the community’s strategy or activities.

At its discretion, the CMA may promote, market or communicate to its audiences regarding recipients of CMA Communities of Interest Grants. The CMA will be given access to participation metrics for the communities of interest that receive grants and may survey CMA Communities of Interest Grant recipients on an ad hoc basis to inform their community engagement activities.