

Centre for Public Health

Seed Grants 2025

Request for proposals

Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health

Published: 25th August 2025

Deadline: 30th October 2025



Christian Medical College Vellore

Overview

The Centre for Public Health (CPH) at Christian Medical College Vellore is inviting proposals from its adjunct faculty for Seed Grants 2025. The long-term vision of CPH is to establish sustainable, multidisciplinary research workstreams that address pressing public health challenges in India. Through this series of request for proposals (RFP), CPH aims to build a pipeline of actionable research that will inform programs, policies, and system-level improvements in public health.

These competitive grants are designed to catalyse innovative and high-impact public health research and interventions in priority areas by generating preliminary or proof-of-concept evidence and laying a strong foundation for future extramural grant applications.

Background

Maternal and child health (MCH) is a cornerstone of public health and central to achieving sustainable development and intergenerational equity. Interventions during the critical window of the first 1,000 days, from conception through a child's second birthday, offer a powerful opportunity to influence survival, growth, neurodevelopment, and long-term health outcomes. Persistent challenges such as maternal undernutrition, high prevalence of anaemia, rising burden of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM), suboptimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, and inadequate access to mental health services for adolescents pose significant barriers to progress.

The compounded burden of micronutrient deficiencies, early-life cognitive delays, and adolescent psychosocial distress, especially in marginalized populations such as tribal and underserved urban communities, highlights the need for innovative, scalable, and culturally responsive public health strategies. These must be multisectoral in nature, bridging the health, nutrition, education, and social protection systems. In parallel, vaccine hesitancy continues to impede immunization coverage and public trust, necessitating behaviourally informed, community-engaged communication and demand-generation strategies. This thematic area aligns with multiple Sustainable Development Goals¹, notably SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and complements India's national goals on reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality. We invite proposals that promote integrated, equity-driven, and contextually grounded approaches to strengthen maternal, child, and adolescent health outcomes and inform scalable policy action, with a focus on the following sub-themes:

- *Enhancing Childhood Nutrition and Cognitive Development*
- *Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Use*
- *Maternal Health and Pregnancy-Related Morbidity*
- *Strengthening Immunization and Vaccine Confidence Among Mothers & Children*

¹ [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

Eligibility

Applications are open exclusively to intramural adjunct faculty of the CPH. Each proposal must be submitted by a Principal Investigator (PI). The team may include Co-Investigators from within or outside the institution, including non-adjunct faculty. An adjunct faculty member may be listed as a Co-Investigator on multiple proposals but can apply for only one project as PI in each funding round. Proposals should present well-defined research questions, clear work packages, realistic timelines, and a plan to generate preliminary data.

Funding and Grant Period

This call for proposals is envisioned as a kick-starter round, and awardees are expected to work toward external funding within three years of receiving a seed grant. Up to three projects will be supported under this call, each with a maximum funding limit of ₹30 lakhs, for a duration of up to 36 months.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants must submit a concept note (max 1500) words or 4 pages in DOCX format. The concept note must include:

- Title of the study
- Brief introduction
- Justification for the study addressing the criteria outlined in the checklist (Annexure II)
- Research objectives (ideally not more than 3)
- Methodology aligned to objectives with preliminary data if any, timelines and expected outcomes/ deliverables (including manuscript and grant submission plans)
- Budget with brief justification (Annexure I)
- Proposed Team
- Proposed pathways for future funding and scale-up plans, if successful

A consolidated bio sketch (maximum of 2 pages) of PI and Co-investigators as an appendix, providing evidence of relevant and/or complementary expertise in the form of previous publications, conference presentations, etc.

The proposal should clearly align with the selected theme and demonstrate scientific merit, feasibility, and potential for real-world public health impact. Proposals must be submitted through [CPH RFP Submission Form](#).

Budget guidelines: The cumulative capital expenditure must not exceed ₹5,00,000. Any deviation from these limits will require prior written approval. The budget should be realistic, justified, and aligned with the project objectives.

Evaluation Criteria

To support applicants in preparing strong and competitive proposals, two tools are provided:

- *Researcher's Self-Evaluation Checklist* (Annexure- II) – A tool to help applicants self-assess their proposal before submission. Kindly attach it along with the application.
 - *Research Proposal Scoring Rubric* (Annexure- III)– This rubric outlines how proposals will be evaluated by the review committee.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to use these tools to refine their submissions.

Each submission will be assessed on a 5-point scale:

5 = Excellent, 4 = Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, and 1 = Poor.

Please note that the criteria '**Public Health Importance**', '**Quality of research proposal objectives**' and '**Scalability**' will carry additional weight in the overall evaluation.

Review and Selection Process

All submitted proposals will undergo a rigorous, three-stage review process to ensure scientific quality, alignment with CPH priorities, and potential for impact and scale-up. Scientifically sound proposals that demonstrate feasibility for external funding will be supported.

The review process will include:

- **Screening Round:** In the first round, proposals will be screened by senior faculty members from within the institution who are not part of the CPH Adjunct Faculty.
- **Blinded Peer Review:** The screened proposals will be independently reviewed by two reviewers external to the project team using the above-mentioned rubric. The average score will be used to rank the proposals for selection.
- **Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) Appraisal:** Shortlisted applicants will present their proposals to the SAG. Refer to Annexure-IV for the presentation template to be used by shortlisted proposals. The SAG will recommend proposals based on scientific quality, innovation, stakeholder engagement, potential for real-world impact, and alignment with CMC CPH priorities.

Monitoring Progress and Final Report

An interim evaluation of each funded project will be conducted at the end of one year to assess progress and alignment with the proposed objectives. Additionally, a comprehensive external review will take place at the end of three years to evaluate the impact, sustainability, and potential of each project for external grants.

Contact for Queries

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Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Annexures

- I. [Budget Template](#)
- II. [Researcher Self-Evaluation Checklist](#)
- III. [Research Proposal Scoring Rubric](#)
- IV. [SAG Presentation Template](#)