



National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

Centre de collaboration nationale
des déterminants de la santé

APPLY TO BE A HEALTH EQUITY PRACTICE SITE

An opportunity for public health departments wanting to enhance organizational capacity to improve health equity

The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH) is launching a 20-month participatory initiative to test ways to develop organizational capacity to advance health equity. The project will utilize an international learning circle, working in tandem with three practice sites to learn what frameworks, strategies and organizational conditions are most useful and effective to develop and sustain Canadian public health organizational capacity for health equity action.

Participating health departments will gain:

- access to state-of-the-art expertise, current evidence and awareness of emerging innovations;
- support for the implementation of a concrete, time-limited organizational change project with actionable steps by an NCCDH knowledge translation specialist;
- increased knowledge and skills on the part of participating staff, ideally amplified by employee learning throughout the department;
- nuts and bolts problem-solving and information exchange according to your schedule and involving colleagues from different jurisdictions; and
- enhanced, mutually supporting professional networks.

Feedback from past projects

After conducting a similar project in 2012, the NCCDH received the following feedback:

Being a practice site “helped shape the direction of the work and contributed ability to get legitimacy and local support.”

– *Medical Officer of Health of participating public health department*

Training provided “wisdom ... in a field where no easy answers are available.”

– *Participating staff member*

Selected health departments acting as practice sites will contribute:

- **A senior management champion**
This person will:
 - act as a strategic advisor;
 - encourage management support;

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- promote the desired organizational change and project throughout the public health department;
- encourage participation and increase awareness of the project aims; and
- oversee processes and outcomes.

Estimated time commitment: 0.5–1 hours/weekly during first three months when designing a change project; 0.5–1 hours/biweekly, June 2018–September 2019

- **A staff project team**

Anticipate a minimum of four additional staff, including one project lead (potentially a middle manager) who will be the primary contact with the NCCDH.

- Additional staff can be from any role or discipline (e.g., health equity lead, social determinants of health nurse, health promoter, policy analyst, epidemiologist, etc.). The application should address the contributions each team member will bring to the project.

Oversight/communications: 1 hour/week

Other notes regarding time commitments:

- All four members are expected to participate in a mutually agreed upon organizational-level change project to improve the department’s capacity to advance health equity (0.5 days/week).
- Each project team will meet monthly with an NCCDH knowledge translation specialist (2 hours/month).
- Each project team will participate quarterly in tele-/video conference with the other two practice sites (3 hours/quarter).
- Each project team will send one to two representatives to participate in quarterly learning circle meetings. The first meeting will be held in person in Montreal (May 31, 2018, and June 1, 2018), following the Public Health 2018 conference. Subsequent quarterly meetings will be held by video-/teleconference, culminating in a November 2019 project debrief (3 hours/quarter).

Combined time estimate: equivalent to a half-time staff for 1.5 years

- **Travel and accommodation costs of two staff** to participate in the opening, in-person meeting of the expanded learning circle with practice sites. These will be held back-to-back with the Canadian Public Health Association’s Public Health 2018 conference in Montreal (estimated cost: up to \$3,000).
- **Contribution of \$2,500** to the NCCDH (can be paid either/both fiscal years; negotiable).

Criteria upon which practice sites will be selected

- Demonstrated commitment to fulfill the above expectations
- Readiness to engage department in a project geared to design, test and implement organizational-level change to improve a facet of your organization’s capacity to advance health equity
- Likelihood of the project concept to be actualized

Language requirements

Learning circle meetings and internal documents for the collaborative initiative will be available in English only. Accordingly, the practice site staff who participate on the learning circle must be able to work in English. Bearing this in mind, the NCCDH is happy to support and work with practice sites in French.

The sites will be selected to represent different organizational models (e.g., health unit, department within health authority) and differing contexts (e.g., rural, urban, geography/population size served by department). One Francophone-serving site will be sought, with the intention of finding a site with bilingual staff members who are able to engage in English-language circle meetings.

The NCCDH will supply an application form and project outline/guidance document.

Organizational projects:

The three sites will design and implement an organizational enhancement project that will work towards organizational-level change — ideally with a focus on a specific public health challenge of interest to multiple programs.

- Examples of an organizational-level change are formalizing institutional commitment; creating or transforming a structure; adjusting funding and resource allocation criteria; staff recruitment and skill building; modifying services; amending targets and measurements; redesigning community engagement and collaboration.
- Examples of public health challenges of widespread concern to which an equity objective can be brought are opioids, built environment, early onset diabetes, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

It is highly recommended that the project be geared to initiative your department has already committed to completing, so that being part of the NCCDH-led initiative will add value to how you fulfill existing goals.

The NCCDH will confer with all public health departments interested in applying to be practice sites.

To learn more, please contact nccdh@stfx.ca.

We would be happy to provide:

- further information about this organizational capacity initiative;
- criteria for selecting the three practice sites;
- requirements expected of participating departments; and
- support for developing a simple application along with a preliminary project proposal.

New deadlines:

Application deadline: April 13, 2018. Notification of acceptance: April 27, 2018.