

2017-18 Research Support Fund Program

Since 2003 the Research Support Fund Program, formerly the Indirect Costs Program, provides Canadian universities and their affiliated research hospitals and institutes with annual funding to help pay for a portion of the hidden or “indirect” costs of research. Examples of such costs include lighting and heating for research space, salaries for staff that provide technical or administrative research support, training costs for workplace health and safety, and the administrative costs associated with getting a patent for an invention.

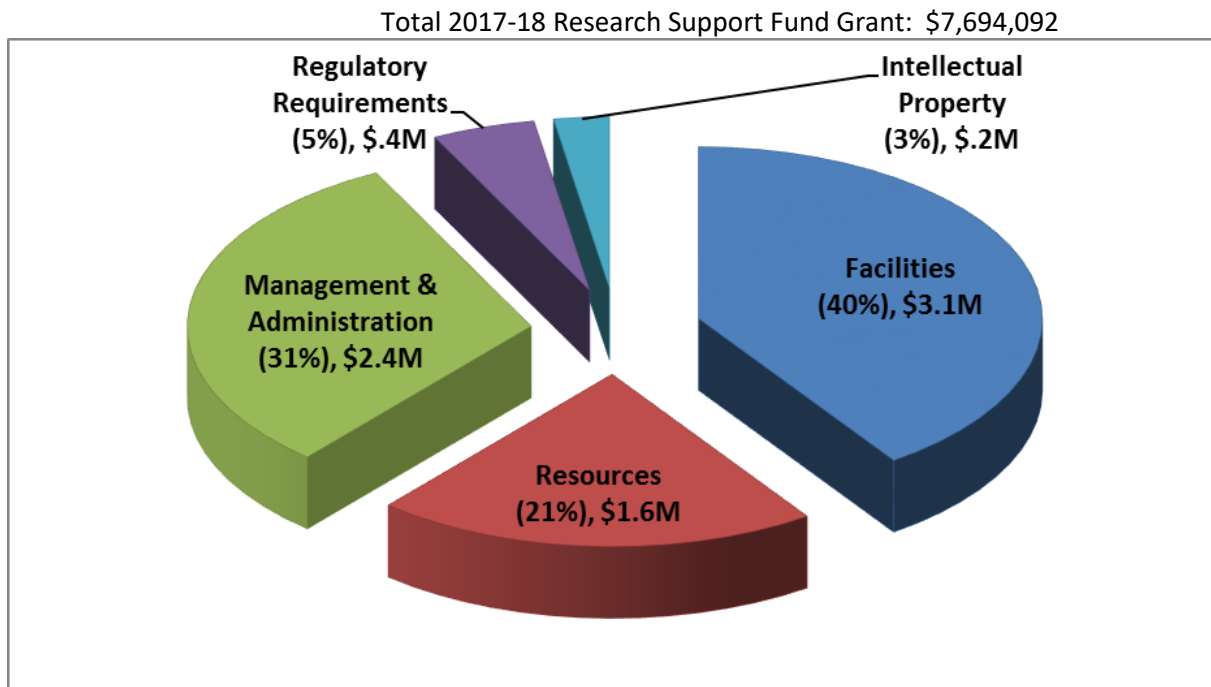
According to government criteria, funded costs must be “indirect” costs such as central and departmental administrative costs that institutions incur to support research but are not direct costs for specific research projects. The Research Support Fund may be used to cover new expenditures as well as to maintain the current level of services to and support of an institution’s research environment, and to generate improvements, innovations and efficiencies in its management.

For more information about the Research Support Fund Program (RSF), please visit the Government of Canada website at: http://www.rsf-fsr.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/index-eng.aspx.

RSF at Dalhousie University

Dalhousie University has included the Research Support Fund grant into its operating budget where it funds the indirect costs borne by the budget. In addition to costs in the various units, the University allots strategic initiatives funding to identify areas of strategic focus for the University which include those that impact Research. The University has directed funds to a variety of areas to improve research strengths and renew University facilities. The total of indirect research costs for the 2017-18 fiscal year were \$42.8 million, of which \$7.7 million were covered by the Research Support Fund grant.

Use of the grant is reported in five categories. The pie chart and descriptions below illustrate the distribution of the RSF grant by category:



Description of costs included in the five categories:

Research Facilities

This includes laboratories, research networking spaces, offices of research and finance administration, and offices of researchers. In 2017-18 the expenditures include operating costs for facilities such as custodial, security, maintenance, utilities and insurance. Technical support for research is also included in this category.

Research Resources

The University reported a portion of library operating costs, administration staff salaries as well as the acquisition of library holdings in this category. Expenditures related to the cost of information resources such as databases, telecommunications, information technology and research tools for the benefit of researchers were also reported in this category.

Management and Administration

Management and administration costs include institutional support for the completion of grant applications/research proposals, salaries and benefits for staff who work on grant applications and research proposals (e.g. grant facilitators, secretarial and administrative assistants). Salaries and benefits for employees who support the research enterprise (research, financial, human resources and procurement offices as well as Faculty departmental administrative support) are also expenditures included in this category.

Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation

In 2017-18 the cost of training faculty and other research personnel in health and safety, animal care, ethics review, handling radiation and biohazards, and environmental assessments is included. Technical support for animal care, handling of dangerous substances, biohazards and radioactive materials is a significant expense included in this category. In addition, costs associated with the creation of regulatory bodies such as the Research Ethics Board are recognized.

Intellectual Property

The University reported expenditures for the Industry Liaison and Innovation (ILI) unit that supports the research community at Dalhousie University and the affiliated hospitals. ILI is responsible for promoting innovation, research development, industry engagement and start-ups. ILI enables the movement of University research from the institutions to the community with tangible results, enabling economic growth.

Impact of the RSF at Dalhousie

The Research Support Fund grant provided \$7.7 million in revenue to support the operating budget of the University. Without this funding, alternative funding sources or significant reductions in costs would need to be achieved. The funding allows the University to provide a well-resourced research environment including staff and facilities to help attract and retain high quality researchers and highly qualified personnel.