



# PASIFIKA RESEARCH FUND 2021

## Request for Proposals

### 1. Purpose

The New Zealand government's National Science Challenge, [A Better Start E Tipu e Rea](#), is looking to invest in Pasifika-led research to improve child and youth wellbeing, specifically in the areas of healthy weight, successful learning, and mental health and resilience.

*A Better Start* seeks to fund innovative research that is designed to deliver practical, evidence-based solutions which directly target one or more of the three theme areas, with a focus on equitable outcomes for the health and education, and enhancing the wellbeing of Pasifika children and young people, their families and communities.

*A Better Start* is committed to fund research to generate knowledge and understanding that will improve the health and educational outcomes of Pasifika children and young people. The research must have active involvement of Pasifika peoples as researchers, advisors, stakeholders and participants. Pasifika health research design, methods and approaches should be evident in the application, and be responsive to the changing Pasifika contexts, underpinned by Pasifika cultural values and beliefs, and conducted in accordance with Pasifika ethical standards, values and aspirations.

### 2. Funding Amount and Duration

This is a ring-fenced Pasifika research fund. A total funding pool of approximately \$1.0m (exclusive of GST) is available over 2 years to fund up to two projects of up to \$500,000, or one project up to \$1m will be considered. This is a stand-alone round, with no opportunity for extension of these grants beyond 30 June 2024.

Research proposals must address one theme (or more) of the three Challenge theme areas: healthy weight, successful learning, and mental health and resilience. More information about *A Better Start National Science Challenge* is available on the website [abetterstart.nz](#)

*A Better Start* expects that more than one project will be funded. The full funding pool may be awarded to one exceptional proposal.

This funding will be contestable, with all applications scored and ranked according to the agreed assessment criteria by an external assessing panel of subject-matter experts.

### 3. Funding priorities

This fund aims to improve the potential for Pasifika children and young people living in New Zealand to lead healthy and successful lives. Research proposals should focus on a defined age range from conception through to adolescence, and early in childhood where possible.

Because a disproportionate burden of obesity, learning and mental health problems fall on children at a socio-economic disadvantage, the funders invite proposals which prioritise equitable outcomes, with a focus on Pasifika children and young people, their families and communities.

The funders favour project designs that reflect Pasifika research governance or strong Pasifika research partnership. The funders are looking for innovative cross-sector and interdisciplinary approaches, including proposals which use Pasifika research approaches, relevant non-Indigenous research approaches, Pasifika-inspired approaches or a blend of various approaches.

All applicants must also consider [MBIE's Vision Mātauranga policy](#) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

#### 4. Application Process

The two-stage process will be administered through *A Better Start E Tipu e Rea* at the University of Auckland. You'll need to submit a registration of interest, followed by a full application using the ABS Pasifika Research Fund 2021 form, which will be sent to you once an ROI has been received. Proposals received after the deadline will not be eligible for consideration.

**Registration of Interest:** Due by 5pm, **Wednesday, 11 August 2021**

**Full Submission:** Applications will be due by 5pm, **Wednesday, 6 October 2021**

**Rebuttal:** Due by 5pm, **Wednesday, 10 November 2021**

**Outcome:** Applicants will be notified of the outcome by **Wednesday, 15 December 2021**

#### 5. Eligibility

The first-named investigator (i.e. lead researcher) on an application must be based in New Zealand, preferably of Pasifika descent and employed with a New Zealand host organisation. The lead researcher must have tenure, or an employment contract for the term of the grant requested. If the lead researcher's current contract does not cover the term of the grant, they should submit a letter from the host institution to state that, if successful, they will be offered a contract for the duration of the new grant.

Collaborating researchers from outside New Zealand can, at *A Better Start's* discretion, be included as named investigators on an ABS contract but ABS will not contribute to overheads of the overseas investigator.

The research must be largely conducted within New Zealand but welcomes projects with collaborators and/or partnerships with research groups from the wider Pacific region.

Applicants that have current open grants with *A Better Start* will be eligible, although proposals must not duplicate other projects.

Investigators can submit more than one unique application to the Round.

Investigators must make a declaration about other funding sources they have applied for e.g. HRC Pacific projects.

## 6. Budget Guidelines

Funding from *A Better Start* will cover the full rates for named investigators' institutional overheads. However, ABS will not contribute to the overhead of the overseas investigator, and the total proportion of contract budget allocated to overseas investigators must not exceed 20 percent.

The funders will pay for the salaries which staff (including technical staff) would receive if employed by the host institution. Applicants should quote the salary rate and grading for every staff member employed under the grant. Funding will not cover unbudgeted salary increases. Applicants should work with their host institutions to include any anticipated increases (e.g. annual inflation).

Applicants should also consult with their host institutions to supply the correct information regarding Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levy and Kiwisaver/superannuation.

The funders will only cover salaries for researchers who depend on securing some or all of their salary from outside their host institutions (so-called "soft" funding). These researchers must disclose all their other sources of partial salary-support, including employment and research activities. If approved, the funders will cover the remainder of their salary up to 1.0 FTE.

The funding will not cover any item of equipment costing more than \$5,000. Any requests for equipment should include a justification and a quotation. Items costing less than \$2,000 should be classed as consumables.

## 7. Assessment Process

This funding will be contestable, with all applications scored and ranked according to the agreed assessment criteria by an external panel of experts and reviewers with extensive Pasifika representation. Conflicts of interest will be carefully managed throughout the assessment process.

Project applications are assessed through the following steps:

### 7.1. Review of applications

Each full proposal will be reviewed by the ABS Pasifika Fund Strategy Group, who will review the proposal ensuring that all proposals meet the Challenge's mission and contributes to achieving the 10-year KPIs.

### 7.2. Assessing Panel meeting to assess all applications

*A Better Start* will appoint qualified experts to assess the applications. The Assessing Panel will be formed across the three theme areas, with representatives from A Better Start Science Advisory Panel (subject-matter experts), and experts in Māori and Pasifika health and education research.

A Lead Reviewer from the Assessing Panel will be assigned for each proposal who will present it at the assessment meeting. Panel members will produce individual scores for each proposal, based on the assessment criteria. The Assessing Panel will discuss every proposal and agree on the aggregate score and ranking.

The Assessing Panel will provide written feedback to each applicant. Proposals deemed fundable will have one opportunity for rebuttal.

The Assessing Panel meets to consider the applicants rebuttal and make their final assessment and agree on the aggregate score and ranking.

### 7.3. Funding decision by A Better Start Board

The Assessing Panel's recommendations will be considered by the ABS Board for the final funding decision.

Applicants will be notified of the final decision in the week of [insert date as above].

## 8. Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **IMPACT:** Will the proposal produce practical, evidence-based solutions for Pasifika children and their families, directly targeted to one or more of the three theme areas: healthy weight, successful learning and mental health and resilience. What actions will be taken to improve the likelihood of research uptake and impact?
- **PASIFIKA APPROACHES:** What contribution will the proposed research make to: Pasifika health knowledge and the translation of knowledge into health gains; the utilisation of Pasifika health research and ethics processes, the contribution to Pasifika health research workforce development and leadership; and, responsiveness to and partnership with Pasifika stakeholders and communities. Does the proposal value Pasifika health research design, methods and approaches aim to be responsive to changing Pasifika contexts, underpinned by Pasifika cultural values and beliefs, and conducted in accordance with Pasifika ethical standards, values and aspirations? Does the research have active involvement of Pasifika peoples as researchers, advisors, stakeholders and participants?
- **VISION MĀTAURANGA:** Does the proposal value Māori cultural methods, knowledge and approaches? What contribution will the proposal have to realise Vision Mātauranga?
- **EXCELLENCE:** Is the hypothesis or area of inquiry original? Are research-users (Pasifika stakeholders and communities) engaged throughout the research (e.g. co-design, research processes, implementation planning)? Are the design and objectives appropriate, innovative, and feasible?
- **EQUITY:** Is the proposal designed to enable equitable outcomes for Pasifika children, and for other key groups?
- **EXPERIENCE:** Does the research team have the appropriate expertise, diversity, resources, and network to deliver the study? What consideration is given to capacity building for the Pasifika workforce.

## 9. Timeline

| Timeline                                  | Key Dates               |
|---|-------------------------|
| Request for Proposals published           | 19 July 2021            |
| Registration of Interest due              | 11 August 2021          |
| Full proposals due                        | 6 October 2021          |
| Assessing Panel review proposals          | October 2021            |
| Assessing Panel meets (discuss proposals) | November 2021           |
| Panel feedback to applicants              | Week of 1 November 2021 |
| Rebuttal due                              | 10 November 2021        |

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Assessing Panel meet (consider rebuttal and make final recommendations) | November 2021         |
| Funding recommendations to A Better Start Board                         | Early December 2021   |
| All applicants notified   | 15 December 2021      |
| Contracts finalised and grants to commence                              | February / March 2022 |

## Apply Now

If you've read through the documents and still have a question, please contact [contact@abetterstart.nz](mailto:contact@abetterstart.nz)