

## Introduction

The Hamilton Public Library (HPL) is dedicated to fostering research that enhances public knowledge, informs policy, improves library services and has tangible benefits for our community. Through partnerships with academic institutions, HPL provides researchers access to community spaces, resources and networks, while ensuring research conducted in collaboration with the Library is ethical, inclusive and beneficial to researchers and the community.

These guidelines establish a structured process for researchers who want to collaborate with HPL through McMaster University's [Community Research Platform \(CRP\)](#) or as independent researchers from other institutions or organizations.

If you are a researcher based at McMaster University, please read and follow **Part 1** (Page 1).

If you are a researcher based at an institution or organization other than McMaster University, please read and follow **Part 2** (Page 4).

## Part 1: Working with HPL Through McMaster's Community Research Platform

The CRP is a formal partnership with McMaster University, HPL and other community organizations. It provides a structured framework for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and access to research infrastructure. Researchers benefit from existing agreements, resources and advisory support, which makes establishing research collaborations with HPL easier.

### Step 1: Initiating a Research Collaboration

- Contact the [CRP Program Manager](#)
  - Researchers should first connect with McMaster's CRP Manager to discuss potential projects and partnership opportunities
  - The CRP Manager will help identify HPL contacts and ensure alignment with Library objectives
- Identify Opportunities and Draft a Research Plan
  - Research should align with HPL's strategic priorities of connecting to the community, being relevant and responsive and being a learning organization.
  - Research should be practical and actionable and contribute to improved Library services, community well-being, or public policy.
  - Researchers must prepare a preliminary research proposal, including:
    - Research objectives and expected outcomes
    - Methodology and ethical considerations
    - The expected role of HPL (space use, participant recruitment, data-sharing, etc.)

- Potential funding sources and timelines (Including opportunities for collaboration on grant applications)
- Share the proposal with HPL leadership and the CRP Manager for initial feedback

## **Step 2: Formalizing the Partnership**

- Secure Ethical Approvals
  - Research involving human participants requires approval from the McMaster University Research Ethics Board (REB) before data collection begins.
  - Researchers must ensure compliance with Canada's Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS-2) on ethical research.
- Establish Agreements
  - Depending on the research project, HPL and CRP researchers may formalize their collaboration through:
    - A Memorandum of Understanding – Outline each partner's scope, roles and responsibilities, including a facility use agreement, if needed.
    - A Data-Sharing Agreement – Ensure compliance with privacy laws and ethical standards if Library data is involved.
- Coordinate Logistics
  - Researchers should work with HPL to:
    - Confirm Library locations and space availability for data collection
    - Discuss how the research team will engage with Library Staff and Members
    - Develop a timeline and key deliverables for the project

## **Step 3: Conducting Research**

- Respect Library Policies and Community Guidelines
  - Researchers must adhere to HPL's [Working With Us](#): Partnerships, Programs and Space Policy
  - Conduct studies in a non-disruptive, respectful and inclusive manner
  - Researchers must ensure recruitment processes are voluntary, transparent and non-coercive
- Maintain Regular Communication
  - Regular check-ins with HPL Staff and the CRP Manager ensure smooth project progress
  - Communicate in advance any modifications to the research plan

- Ensure Inclusivity and Accessibility
  - Research conducted through HPL should include diverse populations, particularly historically underrepresented groups.
  - Materials and communications should be explicit, accessible and available in multiple formats (large print, digital formats, multilingual options, etc.)

#### **Step 4: Knowledge Sharing and Project Completion**

- Share Preliminary Findings
  - Before final publication, researchers should provide preliminary results to HPL for review and discussion
- Present Research to Stakeholders
  - Researchers are encouraged to share findings through Library-hosted events, workshops, or public presentations
  - Prepare lay summaries or reports for non-academic audiences
- Submit a Final Report
  - Using the provided template, submit a final report to HPL and the CRP summarizing:
    - Key findings and community impact
    - Recommendations for future research or action
    - Any materials developed for public dissemination
- Acknowledge HPL's Contribution
  - All publications and presentations should include HPL's contribution to the research process.

#### **Part 2: Working with HPL as an Independent Researcher**

HPL has an independent review process for researchers who are not working at McMaster University or with McMaster's CRP.

##### **Step 1: Submit a Research Request**

- Complete the HPL Research Request Form [\[AB1\]](#)
- The form includes:
  - Project description, objectives and significance
  - Requested HPL involvement (space, Staff, data access, recruitment etc.)
  - Ethical considerations (REB approval status)
  - Expected outcomes and impact

- Submit the Proposal for Review
  - HPL Staff will evaluate the request based on the following:
    - Alignment with HPL's mission, resources and strategic goals
    - Feasibility and potential community impact
    - Ethical considerations and data privacy concerns
    - The capacity of HPL to support the request based on Staff and space requirements
- Approval and Next Steps
  - If the proposal is approved, schedule a meeting to refine aspects of the research proposal and discuss/align next steps.
  - Additional formal agreements (MoU, Data-Sharing Agreement, etc.) may be required.

## **Step 2: Conducting Research**

- Adhere to Ethical Guidelines
  - Researchers must have formal REB approval before collecting data from Library Members or Staff.
  - Any research involving vulnerable populations (older adults, youth, newcomers, etc.) requires special ethical considerations.
- Ensure Transparent Communication
  - Regular progress updates to HPL Staff. Any changes in research design must be reviewed and approved.

## **Step 3: Knowledge Mobilization and Impact**

- Share Findings with HPL
  - Researchers must provide accessible summaries of findings for HPL and the community.
- Public Engagement
  - If possible, researchers should host a public talk, workshop, or exhibit in the Library.
- Final Reporting
  - The final report, detailing key findings, contributions, and recommendations, must be shared with HPL using the provided template.

- Acknowledge HPL in Publications
  - Credit HPL in research reports, publications and presentations.

**Additional Considerations for All Researchers**

- Respect Library Spaces – Research must not disrupt regular Library operations
- Inclusivity and Accessibility – Projects should reflect HPL's commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Public Impact – Share findings in ways that benefit Library Members and the community

For more information or to submit a research request, contact the HPL [Manager of Adult Programming](#).

[\[AB1\]](#) This will link to the final RRF

