

Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research
2022-2023 to 2026-2027
Strategic Plan Summary

October 2022



Who We Are

The Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research (CHASR) is a unique university-based research support and consulting service. Operating on a fee-for-service basis, CHASR's primary mission is to support academic-based researchers from a variety of disciplines, backgrounds, and institutions, government (federal, provincial, and municipal) and NGO clients, and private sector firms. We achieve our mission through access to a unique blend of research tools and methods, supported by a team of staff with varied, yet complementary backgrounds and experience, along with access to physical infrastructure, equipment, and space on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

With a broad range of experience, expertise, and tools at our disposal, CHASR supports a diverse array of applied and social research. We support all phases of research, including data collection, data processing, data analysis, and reporting. Our in-house supports and tools enable us to lend unique and innovative approaches to all CHASR-supported research.

CHASR has grown quickly, in some years experiencing exponential growth in demand and numbers of research projects supported, with over 1,500 unique research projects supported to date. The CHASR staff complement has similarly grown over time, increasing from one staff person in 2011 to 10 professional full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2022. This is in addition to dozens of currently employed undergraduate and graduate students and research assistants.

In 2020, we rebranded to CHASR (from the Social Sciences Research Laboratories), along with a new visual identity and website. Our rebranding was undertaken for several reasons, the most prominent of which was to carve out our place as national leaders in supporting applied and social research.

Why this Plan and Why Now?

CHASR is at a crossroads. The loss of core institutional funding in 2020-2021 from the University of Saskatchewan, equivalent to approximately one-third of our annual operating budget, significantly impacted the operations and short-and long-term trajectory of CHASR. With very little prospect for the reinstatement of core institutional funding over the short-term, CHASR needs to refocus our efforts and resources to ensure our sustainability and viability. To that end, CHASR needs to pivot our operations to become entirely self-sufficient and operate wholly on a fee-for-service basis.

Where We Are Going

The rebranding of the SSRL to CHASR in 2020 generated considerable expectations for the growth of CHASR beyond the traditional social sciences, and further, beyond the University of Saskatchewan campus. University of Saskatchewan-based researchers have traditionally been ardent supporters and users of CHASR research supports and consulting services. However, to carve out our place as national leaders in supporting applied and social research, we can no longer disproportionately rely on University of Saskatchewan-based researchers as we have in the past.

Anecdotally, CHASR has been successful in broadening our base of research projects and researchers supported beyond the University of Saskatchewan. However, with only 14.5% of our research projects originating from outside of the University of Saskatchewan in 2021-2022 it is evident that we still have a long way to go to achieve the vision of CHASR as a true pan-Canadian research hub.

CHASR has implemented a sliding scale of rates and fees that are determined based on the source institution of the lead researcher or principal investigator for each contracted research project. Research projects external to the University of Saskatchewan generate higher revenue margins, with rates and fees up to 33% higher than comparable rates for University of Saskatchewan-based researchers.

To help achieve the vision of CHASR as a true Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research, while simultaneously increasing our revenue-generating potential, CHASR is committing to increasing the proportion of external research projects supported by CHASR to a minimum of 50% of all annual projects by the end of 2026-2027.

Figure 1 outlines our ambitious, yet achievable yearly targets to meet the anticipated 50% external research projects target in 2026-2027. Based on 2021-2022 project numbers, that difference would have yielded an additional \$121,432 in research revenue in 2021-2022 without increasing the number of research projects supported.

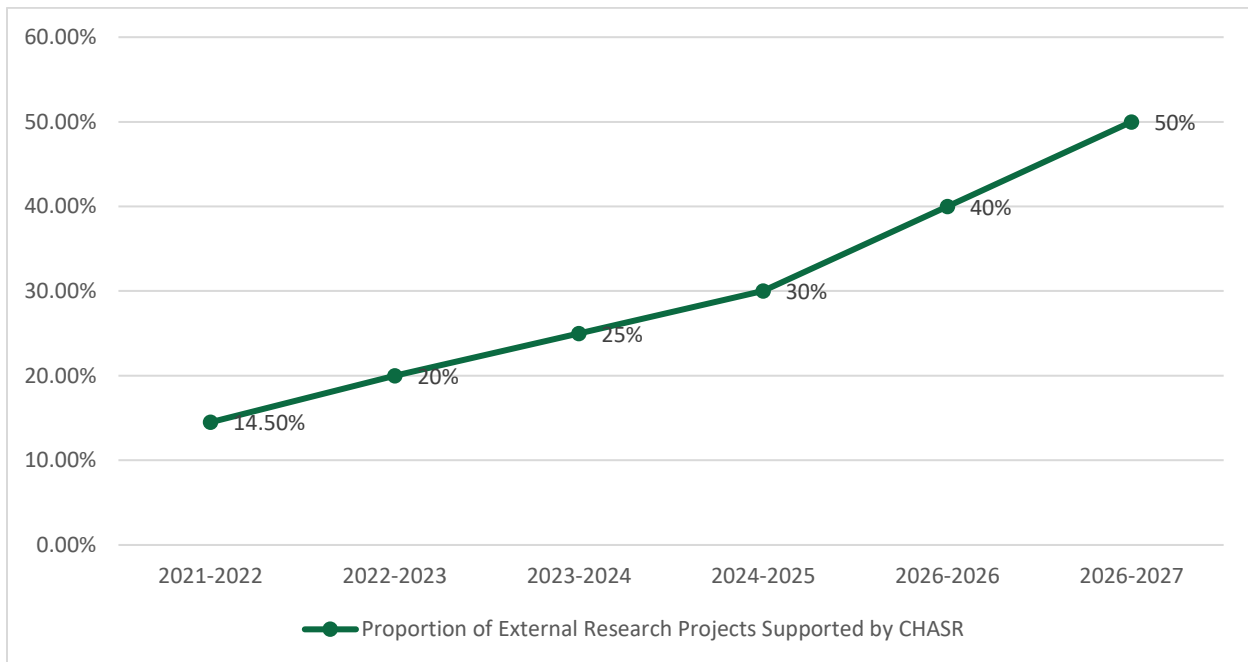


Figure 1 – Targeted Increase in the Proportion of External Research Projects Supported by CHASR

Securing more long-term, multi-year projects is another means through which CHASR can achieve greater consistency, less volatility, and long-term viability. While many CHASR research projects extend across one or more fiscal years, most research projects supported by CHASR (74% in 2021-2022) are short-term projects that last for one year in duration, or less. Securing additional multi-year projects that are long-term in nature provide an added degree of financial security that comes with longer-term contracts. These longer-term contracts allow for better strategic resourcing of projects and long-term project planning.

To help provide greater future security, consistency, and viability that will allow for better strategic resourcing of projects and long-term project planning, CHASR is committing to increasing the proportion of long-term, multi-year projects to a minimum of 40% of all CHASR-supported projects by the end of 2026-2027.

How We Will Get There

CHASR will undertake several actions over the next five years in order to ensure that we successfully grow our presence beyond the University of Saskatchewan campus and increase the proportion of long-term, multi-year projects. More specifically:

- We will refocus our services and invest additional time, energy, and resources into those services that represent areas of potential growth and opportunity, while also focusing on those research support services that generate the highest revenue margins.
- We will realign our internal administrative structures to ensure that sufficient and appropriate human and financial resources are dedicated to current and future growth areas within our unit, without sacrificing or having a detrimental impact on longstanding areas of success.
- We will capitalize on opportunities that exist, both within and outside our sphere of influence and control, that will contribute to our overall success and the achievement of our strategic vision for CHASR, including specific projects and initiatives; fostering and nurturing partnerships; appropriately connecting with our stakeholders and audiences through a more deliberate and cohesive approach to our communications and external relations; and seeking out alternate funding strategies where appropriate.
- We will launch a reimagined CHASR governance structure consisting of a new CHASR Advisory Committee that aligns with our new reality of operating entirely as a fee-for-service unit, and an increased focus on externally generated research projects and research contracts to ensure continued and sustained viability.
- We will provide regular, annual updates on our progress toward the goals and objectives of this strategic plan on a new Planning and Reporting page on the CHASR website.

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