



Brain Canada Foundation

Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research - **Momentum Grants**

Request for Applications (RFA)

About Brain Canada Foundation

Brain Canada Foundation (Brain Canada) is a national registered charity that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than two decades, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, and brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and to ensure that Canada has a robust pipeline of talent to remain at the forefront in the field of brain research. Brain Canada's vision is to understand the brain in health and illness, to improve lives and achieve societal impact.

The Canada Brain Research Fund (CBRF) is an innovative arrangement between the Government of Canada, through Health Canada, and Brain Canada Foundation, designed to increase support of brain research on behalf of Canadians, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments. The Fund supports the very best Canadian neuroscience, fostering collaborative research and accelerating the pace of discovery, in order to improve the health and quality of life of those who suffer from brain disorders. To date, Health Canada has invested over \$155 million through the CBRF, which has been matched by Brain Canada and its donors and partners.

www.braincanada.ca

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Rationale

The **Momentum Grants** program builds upon the success of the *Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research* program, which provides funding to early-career researchers to build a foundation of research excellence and innovation in Canada. Neuroscience research continues to uncover new insights into the complexities of the brain, opening up avenues for improved diagnostics, therapies, and interventions for brain disorders. Through the Momentum Grants, we aim to provide researchers with funding to sustain and accelerate their ongoing research, allowing them to capitalize on the initial momentum generated through their seed funding.

By investing in these researchers, we foster a culture of scientific excellence and promote the growth of their careers as they make significant contributions to their fields of research. The program not only encourages scientific exploration and discovery but also fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the development of interdisciplinary approaches to tackle the most pressing challenges in brain research.

Brain Canada recognizes the critical role that continued support plays in empowering researchers to pursue ideas that will advance our understanding of the brain. By investing in these exceptional researchers, we aim to accelerate the pace of discovery and translation, leading to tangible benefits for people affected by brain disorders and those striving to maintain a healthy brain, contributing to the overall advancement of neuroscience research in Canada and beyond.

Scope

This funding opportunity is open to previous recipients of *Azrieli Foundation-Brain Canada Early-Career Capacity Building Grants* or *Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research Grants*. The Momentum Grants program aims to enable researchers to build upon their initial projects and explore new dimensions of their research with the potential to generate breakthroughs in our understanding of the brain. Researchers are encouraged to think boldly, pushing the boundaries of current knowledge and embracing interdisciplinary approaches to address complex brain-related challenges.

Grant Details

This funding opportunity has a funding envelope of \$1,000,000 CAD to support up to five grants of \$200,000 over two years. Grant names may include acknowledgment of specific donors who are contributing funding for this competition.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Evidence clearly shows that increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in research environments enhances excellence, innovation, and creativity. Brain Canada is committed to excellence through equity and encourages applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply to our funding opportunities, which will promote the expression of diverse perspectives, approaches, and experiences, including those of underrepresented groups.

Eligibility

- Applicants must have been previously awarded a *2018 Azrieli Foundation-Brain Canada Early-Career Capacity Building Grant* or a *Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research Grant*. Please note,

to be eligible to apply to the Momentum Grants, the end date of the previous grant, including any no-cost extension period, must be before the expected funding start date of September 1, 2024, and the applicant must not have any overdue reporting to Brain Canada from their previous grant at this date.

- Applicants must demonstrate how the findings and/or outcomes of their initial grant led to the proposed research project; there must be a clear link and progression forward.
- Applicants must be conducting research at an eligible Canadian institution for the entire duration of the grant, and must be considered an independent researcher at their institution. Such an individual normally holds the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor; can initiate and direct their own independent lines of research as principal investigator; has full responsibility for running their laboratories; has full control of their research funds; and is permitted to supervise trainees (if applicable, as per their institution's policy).
- Research applications may be related but cannot be identical to any other currently funded projects. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify Brain Canada immediately should overlap arise from new funding awarded during the application and review process of this competition.
- Applicants must be able to initiate the project in September 2024 when funding is expected to begin.
- Each applicant is only eligible to apply to the Momentum Grants program up to two (2) times (i.e. two competition cycles).

For any inquiries related to eligibility, including confirmation of previous grant end date and/or outstanding/overdue reporting obligations, please contact us at futureleaders@braincanada.ca.

Use of Funds

Funds must contribute toward the direct costs of the research project for which they were awarded and should be directly attributable to the project or activity being performed.

Eligible Costs

These funds may be used to support any aspect of the research project, including:

- Salaries for technical personnel
- Stipends of trainees
- Supplies and materials
- Maintenance of essential equipment and/or purchase of equipment that is currently unavailable but essential for the project
- Provision of special services and user fees
- Knowledge Mobilization, including, but not limited to, travel of the Principal Investigator and trainees for presentation of results at conferences, publication costs in peer-reviewed and open-access journals or repositories (including article processing charges), knowledge exchange activities (workshops, brochures, books), and knowledge diffusion activities via online technologies (webinars, podcasts)

Ineligible Costs

- Salaries and consulting fees of any investigator or researcher holding an independent academic or research appointment
- General office and lab equipment
- Indirect costs or overhead costs associated with managing the research project

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and Brain Canada must be consulted on expenses that are not listed here to determine the eligibility of other categories of expenditure.

Criteria for Assessment

There will be equal weighting of the following criteria:

Innovation and Originality

Quality of the project which, while solidly based in scientific principles and technical feasibility, offers new concepts and approaches, with the potential to change the paradigms of the field, open the field to new experimental directions, or address a critical barrier to progress in our understanding of the brain and nervous system. A clear link should be made from the applicant's previously-funded *Azrieli Foundation-Brain Canada Early-Career Capacity Building Grant* or *Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research Grant*; the proposed project need not be a direct extension of the previously-funded project but does need to build on some aspect of the outcome(s) of that grant.

Feasibility

The degree to which the proposed research can be successfully executed using the proposed methodology within the timeframe, budget, and resources available. Appropriate background and justification for the proposed research should be provided through literature citations and data from other sources, and/or from preliminary findings of the applicant. The investigator's potential to successfully complete the project and to carry out innovative research based on their track record will also be considered.

Potential for Impact

The degree to which the direct outcomes of this project, or the new lines of research that could be developed from this project, have the potential for long-term impact. This can include elements such as advancing knowledge, building capacity, informing decision making, health impacts, and broad economic and social impacts. In addition, the incorporation of sex- and gender-based analysis plus (SGBA+) and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles in the design and execution of research is critically important for broadening the potential impact of the work and the potential for new knowledge to be translated into health benefits for all.

Timeline

Launch of Request for Applications	January 16, 2024
Deadline for Receipt of Registration Forms	17:00 ET, February 12, 2024
Invitation to Full Application	February 16, 2024
Deadline for Receipt of Full Applications	17:00 ET, March 22, 2024
Notification of Decision	June 2024
Funding Begins	September 1, 2024

How to Apply

Please note that this funding opportunity includes a Registration Form and a Full Application stage. Applicants must submit a Registration Form in order to be eligible for the Full Application stage. **It is the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure their submission adheres to the requirements and is received by the deadlines outlined above. There will be no appeal to late submissions.** Brain Canada will acknowledge receipt of Registration Forms and Full Applications within two business days.

Registration Form

Registration Forms must be submitted using Brain Canada's electronic grant management system, SmartSimple: https://braincanada.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp.

Applicant Information

The information collected under this section will not be shared in an identifiable form with public, external stakeholders (e.g., Health Canada, funding partners), or reviewers, and will have no impact on the evaluation of submitted grant applications. All responses are completely anonymized and aggregated to ensure protection of the identity of any individual. Please see Brain Canada's [Privacy Policy](#).

Project Summary

- Project title
- Keywords describing the research project (maximum 10 words)
- A summary of the proposed research, including a description of the link and progression from the previously-funded Brain Canada seed grant to the current application (maximum 300 words). *Citations are not required at the Registration Form stage, but can be included if desired and must fit within the word limit.*

Optional Information

- Provide names and contact information for up to three individuals who are knowledgeable in the research area and would be able to evaluate the application. Individuals should not have a conflict of interest.
- List individuals to whom the application should not be sent for review.

Brain Canada will take these and other considerations into account when establishing the composition of the external Peer Review Panel.

Certification and Signature of the Principal Investigator

- Please note that institutional signatures are not required at the Registration Form stage.

Full Application

Full Applications must be submitted using Brain Canada's electronic grant management system; access will be granted upon invitation to the Full Application stage.

The Full Application must be formatted using 12-point Times New Roman or 10-point Arial font, single-spaced, on a letter-size page with 1" minimum margins. The font size for figures and legends must be a minimum of 10 points. Use of a condensed font and spacing is not permitted. Applications received in any other format, exceeding the page limits, incomplete, or late, will be rejected.

Project Summary (pre-populated from Registration Form)

- Project title
- Keywords describing the research project (maximum 10 words)
- A summary of the proposed research, including a description of the link and progression from the previously-funded Brain Canada seed grant to the current application (maximum 300 words)

Lay Summary

- Suitable for publication and understandable by the general public (maximum 300 words)

Proposal (maximum eight pages, including figures and legends, excluding references)

Proposals should include the following information, structured to best address the Criteria for Assessment outlined above:

1. The **overall objectives** to be achieved by the end of the funding period
2. The **rationale** for undertaking the study, including:
 - A summary of the results and key findings of the initial Brain Canada seed grant and description of the link to the current research and hypotheses
 - The current state of research on the topic and key knowledge gaps that motivate this study
 - Additional preliminary evidence, if any, supporting the proposed research and hypotheses
 - Clear indication of any overlap between this proposal and any other currently funded projects
3. The **work plan**, including:
 - The approaches, methods, and techniques that will be used to achieve the stated objectives; if applicable, outline the specific contributions of any collaborators involved in the project
 - Methods of data analysis, including statistical methods and calculations to show that the study will be adequately powered
 - Potential pitfalls or obstacles, and how they will be overcome
 - Considerations of SGBA+ and EDI principles should be integrated directly into the work plan, as appropriate
4. **SGBA+ and EDI considerations**, including:
 - How sex and/or gender considerations will be incorporated into the work plan. Research projects proposing to use only one sex or gender should provide strong justification from the scientific literature or preliminary data to support this decision.
 - Description of any targeted research including diverse populations, such as that based on age, Indigenous identity, visible minority identity, or disability.

- Applicants are encouraged to review CIHR's [Online Training Modules for Integrating Sex and Gender in Health Research](#).
5. The **expected outputs** from the study, and how the findings will be disseminated:
 - How the outcomes from the study will advance knowledge on the research topic
 - Plans for making the data from the project available to other qualified researchers
 - Knowledge mobilization plan describing the intended target audiences for the findings, plans for dissemination and stakeholder engagement toward achieving research impact, and how the findings may be adapted and shared with broader knowledge users. Applicants are encouraged to visit CIHR's [Guide to Knowledge Translation Planning](#).
 - The expected broad impacts of the results - refer to the main categories of research impacts: advancing knowledge, building capacity, informing decision-making, health impacts, and broad economic and social impacts.
 6. The **role of trainees** in the project and the unique learning opportunities they will experience, if applicable

Timeline and Anticipated Milestones

Please indicate the key intermediate stages in achieving the overall objectives, and the projected timeline for achieving them. A template will be provided at the Full Application stage.

Institutional Approvals

Please outline what applicable approvals you will have in place for the expected funding start date, and timeline for any addendums or additional approvals specific to the proposal that may need to be added thereafter (maximum one page). Please note that, if awarded, applicants will be required to provide documentation, where applicable, demonstrating institutional approvals and compliance with policies on the ethical use of human subjects, animals, and biohazards prior to funding release.

Biographical Information

A Biographical sketch (maximum four pages) of the Principal Investigator must be submitted. A template will be provided at the Full Application stage.

Additionally, applicants are required to provide the following information:

- The average number of hours per week you will devote to the proposed research project.
- Funding history, including past and active grants. It is the responsibility of the applicant to disclose any funding received, related to the proposed work. Applicants should clearly address any possible or perceived overlap of other funding with the proposed project. Make it clear to reviewers how the proposed project is unique compared to other funded work (but may contribute synergistically to the overall research program). Please note that applications will not be evaluated based on the applicant's funding track record.
- Applicants are allowed to list up to 10 publications on which they are an author (do not need to be the first or senior author) and briefly describe the five that are most relevant to their application. Any publications listed should include the DOI, URL, or PMID, where applicable, so reviewers can access them.

Letters of Support from Collaborators

Applicants can submit up to two letters of support (maximum one page per letter) from project collaborators, if applicable. The letter(s) will explain the nature of the collaboration and outline the specific contributions and role of the collaborators in the proposed research project.

Budget

Using the template provided, applicants must submit a yearly budget and a written budget justification (maximum one page) describing the proposed costs in each category of expenditure. Please provide sufficient information to allow reviewers to assess the suitability of the cost allocation. Please ensure your budget uses the full \$200,000.

Certification and Signatures

All signatures must be submitted along with the application by the Full Application submission deadline

- Signature of the Principal Investigator
- Institutional Signature: Signature of the responsible official of the institution where the Principal Investigator will conduct the research.

Review Process

Registration Form

Registration Forms submitted by the deadline will undergo an administrative check and relevance review by Brain Canada to ensure alignment with the scope of this funding opportunity and that all eligibility criteria are met. Eligible applications will be invited to the Full Application stage; applicants with ineligible applications will be notified and withdrawn from the competition.

Full Application

Brain Canada will manage the peer review process. Full Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by at least two members of an external Peer Review Panel composed of researchers from Canadian and international institutions with experience and expertise in the relevant field(s). Brain Canada will take into account any conflicts of interest and other relevant considerations to ensure a balanced panel.

Based on the reviewer scores, the Peer Review Panel will discuss the top applications. The Panel will recommend to Brain Canada the applications that have received a high merit score. All Applicants will receive anonymized written reviewer comments. Applicants whose applications were discussed at the Peer Review Panel meeting will additionally receive Scientific Officer notes from the proceedings. Brain Canada will not entertain appeals against the assessment of the Peer Review Panel.

Confidentiality and Ownership

Brain Canada will keep all materials submitted for this funding opportunity confidential and only share them with reviewers, members of the Peer Review Panel, and observers who have signed confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements.

Brain Canada does not claim ownership of intellectual property (IP) arising from the research they fund, and expects that any IP arising from this funding is developed and commercialized according to the policies of the research institutions in which the research is performed.

Communications

Recipients of a Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research - Momentum Grant must make every effort to attend events organized by Brain Canada, and present their projects, if applicable, to demonstrate the implications and importance of their research.

Contact Information

For more information, or if you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact Brain Canada at futureleaders@braincanada.ca.