REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued By
Parkinson Canada

PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM
2024 - 2025 Cycle

Release Date:	**September 15, 2023**
Application Deadline (Online Receipt):	**December 5, 2023** **(11:59 PM EST)**
Notifications of Award:	**March 2024**
Funding Start Date:	**August 1, 2024**
Duration of Award:	**1 year** (non-renewable)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Important Changes to the 2024-2025 Competition

1. Research Priority Area: Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN)
   - For this research cycle only, Parkinson Canada has earmarked up to $200,000 of the Annual Research Competition budget for projects submitted to the competition that use data from the C-OPN Database, Registry and/or Biobank. More details are provided below.
2. Addition of a New Impact Statement
   - All applications will now include an Impact Statement. This is a description of how this project will move the field forward and contribute to new scientific knowledge in Parkinson's, how it aligns with the Research Themes of Parkinson Canada, how findings from the project will impact the lives of people with Parkinson's.

3. Addition of a Patient Involvement Statement
   - Applications will also include a description of how people affected by Parkinson's will be involved in the project, if applicable. This can include recruitment for clinical, population health or qualitative studies, and/or how individuals may be involved in study design and knowledge translation or dissemination considerations.
4. Introduction of Weighted Scoring Criteria
   - To ensure fairness and consistency in the review process, weighted scoring will be applied such that all Pilot Project Grant applications will be evaluated on the bases of the following: Novelty & Innovation (40%), Lab Performance (20%), Proposed Budget, Project Feasibility and Methodology (20%), Impact of Project (20%).
5. Lived Experience Reviewers
   - Lived experience expert reviewers will review the following sections from submitted applications: 1) the non-scientific summary, 2) the impact statement and 3) the patient involvement statement.
6. New Budget Templates
   - To standardize budget submissions for all Pilot Project Grant applicants, budget templates (excel spreadsheet format) will now be provided on the Parkinson Canada website and in SMApply, and completion of the template will be required for all applications. completion of the **Applications that do not use the provided budget template will be disqualified from the competition.**

BACKGROUND

Parkinson Canada is pleased to offer the Pilot Project Program (the "Program") as part of its strategic initiative to encourage investigators (researchers) with faculty or equivalent appointments, to enter and perform research in new, specifically targeted, high priority areas of Parkinson's research in Canada. It is our intent that successful applicants in this Program will utilize the funds provided under the Program to acquire preliminary data leading to development of larger projects eligible for funding from a major granting agency. Parkinson Canada intends to provide awards in the amount of up to $75,000 over a one-year term to outstanding applicants who meet the eligibility criteria of the Program and who have been approved by Parkinson Canada's Scientific Advisory Council (the "Advisory Council"). Funds awarded under the Program are to be used to cover operating expenses, technical support staff salaries, trainee stipends, and equipment costs for research grants in Parkinson's-related areas.

Through this initiative, Parkinson Canada invites grant applications ("Applications") from applicants committed to conducting novel, emerging, or innovative research in areas relevant to the cure, cause, prevention, improved treatment and/or understanding of Parkinson's disease, related disorders including: Multiple System Atrophy (MSA), Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP), other Parkinson's conditions and its implications on society.

The Program is available to individuals who propose to conduct research on the biomedical, clinical, health services and systems and population areas of Parkinson's. Parkinson Canada plans to adopt a flexible framework in funding awards under the Program.

RESEARCH THEMES OF PARKINSON CANADA

Parkinson Canada provides funding to support research projects within the following research themes, and which have the potential to advance new discoveries in the field and impact the health and well-being of people with Parkinson's. Applications are encouraged to focus on novel and innovative research in the following areas:

1) **Symptomatic Treatments:** treatments that ease outward symptoms of Parkinson's (e.g., medications for tremors).
2) **Disease Modifying Therapies & Treatments:** treatments that target the underlying mechanisms of Parkinson's to interfere with disease progression.
3) **Prevention:** interventions aimed at reducing the risk or severity of Parkinson's Disease.
4) **Diagnosis & Progression:** understanding predictors of Parkinson's for earlier diagnosis and intervention (e.g. biomarkers).
5) **Causes of Parkinson's (and related symptoms):** understanding the physiological processes that lead to Parkinson's and its symptoms (ex. alpha-synuclein aggregation).
6) **Living Well with Parkinson's:** improving the quality of life (QoL) of people living with Parkinson's and understanding the barriers to positive QoL.

FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Pilot Project Grant Program offers up to $75,000 in funding per grant, over a one-year term, to exceptional eligible applicants who have been recommended for funding by the Advisory Council based on an independent review and approved by the Board of Directors.

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA: CANADIAN OPEN PARKINSON NETWORK (C-OPN)

For this year's competition, Parkinson Canada has earmarked up to $200,000 from the overall competition budget for meritorious projects (open to all active competitions) that make strong use of the datasets and resources from the **Canadian Open Parkinson Network (C-OPN)**. To date, C-OPN has enrolled over >1500 Parkinson's patients from participating sites across Canada. From these participants, rich datasets (demographic, epidemiological and clinical information) and biological samples (DNA, PBMC and Serum) have been collected for further testing (additional information can be found online http://copn-rpco.ca/research or by email: national.manager@copn-rpco.ca). Applications will be submitted to the general research competition and will follow the same timeline, evaluation procedure, and general policy guidelines.

ELIGIBILITY

An applicant cannot submit the same unfunded application more than three times in a three-year period.

If you currently hold another Parkinson Canada grant as a PI or Co-PI or have pending final reports from a Parkinson Canada grant or award you are not eligible to apply. Individuals wishing to be involved in an application proposal must be listed as collaborators.

Parkinson Canada is committed to supporting the most advanced and/or highest quality of Parkinson's research in Canada. As such, Applications will be accepted from individuals who are representative of a broad spectrum of health-related communities and sectors, including, but not limited to, researchers, scholars, and health professionals. Applications will be accepted from applicants who meet the eligibility criteria established by Parkinson Canada (as summarized in this Request for Applications) and who are affiliated with and/or conduct research with the following institutions and organizations (an "Approved Institution"):

- Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions (including hospitals and research institutes).
- Canadian non-governmental not-for-profit organizations (including community or charitable organizations) with an explicit research or knowledge translation mandate.

- Other organizations, as determined by the Research and Clinical Advisory Committee of the Board of Parkinson Canada in consultation with the Advisory Council, provided that the applicant's research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of Parkinson Canada.

The applicant must be a researcher who has completed formal training in health-related research. Applicants must have some form of research appointment with an Approved Institution, typically, an employment relationship with such institution or organization.

The applicant's research appointment with his or her Approved Institution must:

1. Allow the applicant to pursue the proposed research project, to supervise trainees and to publish the results of the research.
2. Require the applicant to conform to institutional regulations concerning the conduct of research, the supervision of research trainees, and the employment conditions of trainees and/or support staff paid from the Parkinson Canada grant.

The applicant must be responsible for the intellectual direction of the proposed project and must be willing and able to assume all administrative and financial responsibilities for any funds awarded under the Program. In Applications where the responsibility for the intellectual direction of the proposed project is shared more or less equally between two or more individuals, there may be two or more applicants. However, in this situation, the applicants must nominate, by mutual written agreement, one of the individuals to assume administrative responsibility over funds awarded under the Program. These funds will be paid in trust to the nominated individual's Approved Institution.

Researchers must meet the eligibility criteria established by Parkinson Canada at the time of application.

Applicants are prohibited from receiving the payment of a salary, stipend, honorarium, or any similar form of compensation from any Parkinson Canada grant. Post-doctoral, fellows or trainees are not eligible to apply for funding under this Program. Applicants seeking a fellowship to support trainees at a post-doctoral level or clinical level should refer to Parkinson Canada's Fellowship Programs.

In order to provide Advisory Council members an opportunity during the peer review process to effectively evaluate the success of a previous award, applicants currently in receipt of a Parkinson Canada Pilot Project grant will not be permitted to submit a subsequent application for funding until the current or preceding award term has been completed.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The principal consideration used to evaluate Applications is research excellence potential. There are, however, a variety of additional criteria that may be considered by the Advisory Council in the evaluation process. Each of the criteria listed below will be considered in assigning the overall ranking of the Application, weighting them as indicated for each Application.

Novelty & Innovation (40%)
- Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods? Are the project's objectives original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- Applicants must clarify how their project is truly new or pilot as it relates to other Parkinson Canada funding received.

- Can the results of the proposed project potentially lead to new lines of inquiry, novel findings, and potential follow-on studies the build on the outcomes?

Lab Performance (20%)
- Does the applicant have a strong training and publication history in the area of the proposed or in another field that can be applied to Parkinson's?
- Is the scientific environment (including personnel and trainees who will be involved in the project) likely to contribute to the project's probability of success?
- Is there evidence of institutional support of this project?

Proposed Budget, Project Feasibility & Methodology (20%)

- Is the proposed budget reasonable and adequately justified in the application? Will the proposed budget be sufficient to carry out the research to address the project's scientific aims?
- Are the applicant's conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Is the research team well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the applicant and other researchers (if any)?

Impact of Project (20%)
- Does the project contribute to Canada's leadership potential in Parkinson's knowledge in that field? Where does this work position itself in relation to world knowledge of Parkinson's at this time?
- Will the project advance the understanding of Parkinson's and move the field forward?
- If successful, do the specific objectives of the project lead to measurable improvements in the lives of people affected by Parkinson's?

In addition to the above criteria all applications will also be reviewed with respect to the following:

- Applicants must clarify any overlap or potential overlap with projects that are receiving external funding from other organizations.
- The adequacy of the proposed protection of humans, animals, or of the environment, to the extent that they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the application. The Advisory Council will also examine the provisions for the protection of human subjects (if any) and the safety of the research environment.

Note that the Application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific or social impact and thus deserving of a high priority score.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Request for Applications made by Parkinson Canada is subject to the terms and conditions (the "Terms and Conditions") contained in Parkinson Canada's Research Program Application Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), which the applicant shall be deemed to have accepted upon submission to Parkinson Canada of an Application to participate in the Program.

Failure to comply with the Terms and Conditions may result, in addition to any other remedies Parkinson Canada may have at law, in termination of the Program and exclusion of the applicant from future grant and fellowship award competitions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants shall comply with the reporting obligations outlined in the Guidelines.

Parkinson Canada requires grant recipients to submit:
1. **Progress Report** (due before the 6-month anniversary of the funding start date)
2. **Final Progress Report** and a **Financial Summary** (due within 3 months of grant termination)
3. **Post-grant Report** (2 years after grant termination)

The Progress report shall be submitted to the Parkinson Canada Research Department (research@parkinson.ca) no later than **6 months after the start of the award**. Progress report templates and instructions will be provided by Parkinson Canada in advance of the report deadline. Failure to submit the report by the deadline may result in a pause in funding or the termination of the award.

The Final Progress Report must describe the results of the successful applicant's project and the Financial Summary must detail the use of the funds awarded under the Program. These reports shall be submitted by the successful applicant to Parkinson Canada in substance and form satisfactory to the Advisory Council. The Final Progress Report and the Financial Summary shall be submitted to the Parkinson Canada Research Department (research@parkinson.ca) **no later than three months after the termination of the one-year term of the Program.**

To assist in assessing the benefits of this Program as part of Parkinson Canada's enhanced research program and as part of the broad scope of Parkinson's research in Canada, Parkinson Canada has planned to evaluate the performance of the Program. Such evaluation, amongst other things, is intended to provide a mechanism to demonstrate the effects of donor and public support to the Program over the long term. To this end, **in addition to monitoring the status of the project over the one-year term of the Program, the successful applicant will be required to submit an additional follow-up report two years after the termination of the one-year term of the Program.** This follow-up report should be submitted to the attention of research@parkinson.ca upon the completion of the project or at such other suitable time within the two-year period as determined by the successful applicant. The follow-up report should include material information about the project, including information on the long-term performance of the project, details of published articles or presentations and subsequent funding awards. Further details of such report requirements will be provided to successful applicants at a later date.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are submitted online through the Parkinson Canada online application system called SMApply. It can be accessed through the following link which is also available on the Parkinson Canada website at https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/. The deadline to submit applications is December 5, 2023 (11:59 pm EST). Applications received after this time will not be considered and will be disqualified from the competition. There will be no exceptions.

Applications for Pilot Project Grants include the following:

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New

Roman, Arial or Calibri). Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being disqualified.

1) **Project Summary:** Please state in **500 words or less** the scientific or clinical question being asked, the methods you will use to address it, and the expected outcome. *(To save space, you do not need to include basic information such as the description of Parkinson's disease)*

2) **Non-Scientific Summary**: Please state in **500 words or less** a plain language summary of the project to be reviewed by people affected by Parkinson's who will serve as Lived Experience Expert reviewers. The summary should include a description of the issue the research project is addressing, methods the researcher has chosen to address this problem, and expected finding.

3) **Impact Statement**: Please state in **500 words or less** a plain language description of how this project aligns with the Research Themes of Parkinson Canada (outlined above), how the findings from this project will impact the lives of people with Parkinson's, and how this project will push forward the Parkinson's Research field. This section will be reviewed by people affected by Parkinson's who will serve as Lived Experience Expert Reviewers.

4) **Patient Involvement Statement**: Please state in **150 words or less** how people affected by Parkinson's will be involved in the project, how they will be recruited if applicable, and how they may be involved in informing study design and knowledge translation or dissemination considerations.

5) **Project Narrative: (five (5) pages max**), including:
   o **Background** of proposed studies
   o **Specific objectives** of the proposed studies
      ▪ Applicants are encouraged to emphasize the novelty & innovation of the project objectives, and the high-risk/high-reward nature of the project.
   o **Details of proposed experiment**, including methods and procedures
      ▪ If the project will use **C-OPN**, and would like to be considered for the Research Priority Funding please provide adequate description.
   o Describe how the findings from this project may lead to major future studies.
   Note: The five-page limit applies only to the project narrative and does not include estimated budgets, references, biographical information, ethical approvals or other support documents.

6) **Budget**:
   o Using the **budget template** (Excel spreadsheet) provided on the application website show all significant aspects of the project such as salaries (trainees and support staff), equipment, materials & supplies, services, and knowledge translation. Equipment costs in budgets will be allowable up to 20% of the total budget and travel costs for presentation of research findings will be allowed up to a maximum of $1500. Parkinson Canada will not fund institutional overhead costs.
   o A separate **budget justification document** (max 0.5 page) will be required to and must include sufficient detail on the proposed budget, to allow reviewers to make judgements about the amount of funds necessary to allow the project to proceed.
   o Note: If >75% of the proposed budget is allocated for trainee salaries (PhD, Postdoc, or Clinical Fellow), we strongly encourage the applicant to have their trainees apply to the appropriate Parkinson Canada Research Programs for trainee salary support (Graduate Student Award, Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, or Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship).

7) **Other Funding Sources**: Applicants must include accurate and complete information regarding all other sources of funding support (current or pending), including title, funding source, total amount of funds requested or awarded, inclusive funding period, and percentage effort of the applicant.

8) **Biographical information** of the applicant and any co-applicants (using the Parkinson Canada biographical sketch form – for Principal Investigators).

9) **Relevant and reasonable support materials**, including but not limited to photographs, literature references, maximum **three (3)** publications, letters of collaboration and appendices may be included. Applicants are encouraged to include copies of any assessment scales referred to in their proposals.
10) **Signature of applicant** and an authorized signing official of the applicant's host institution.

Additional information if applicable
- If a version of the present application has been submitted previously to Parkinson Canada, but was not funded, provide a response to the comments of previous reviewers. The response should stand alone, i.e. no required reference to any other documents, including the previous application.
- If funding has been received from Parkinson Canada within the past five (5) years, please indicate whether you were able to publish / present the results of your research or leverage funding for other grants (maximum 500 words).
- An explanation of any interruption in the applicant's academic career.

Applications may be submitted in either English or French, and French-speaking reviewers will be made available for any applications that are submitted in French. French-speaking applicants may also ask to have any application guides and materials translated into French.. For more information please contact research@parkinson.ca.

All applications must be submitted via our online application system (SMApply – https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/). Please retain copies of all application documents in case there are any issues accessing application files.

Any applications in violation of these guidelines are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the Advisory Council

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri). Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being disqualified.

Incomplete applications or applications received later than **December 5, 2023 (11:59pm EST)** will not be considered under any circumstances.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO:
The Parkinson Canada Research Program Application Guidelines Manual available from the Parkinson Canada web site at www.parkinson.ca.

OR CONTACT:

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