

Background

The Discovery Fund is dedicated to finding innovative solutions to solving major challenges in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness. The impact of the resulting projects will lead to greater effectiveness in diagnosis, to testing and implementation of new treatments, and to prevention and recovery from mental illness. The Discovery Fund projects will help improve the health of society locally, nationally and globally as they stimulate innovation and propel clinical discovery within the organization.

Award Guidelines

The Discovery Fund is hosting a Seed Funding Competition to provide support for investigators during the critical period between the initiation of research and the receipt of sustained funding. The Discovery Fund Seed Funding Competition will facilitate innovative research opportunities rather than supplement support for ongoing work and will support basic or clinical investigators. The competition will support up to seven awards per competition. Two of these awards per competition will be for collaborative projects that require two co-Principal Investigators to lead the project and who are from two different departments within the University of Toronto or from different institutions.

A two-year award, up to \$100,000 per year, will be provided to scientists appointed at the Assistant Professor level to support an innovative research idea. The Seed Funding award will be available for a second year based on sufficient progress, continuing availability of funds, and submission of an interim progress report. Final Year 1 and 2 scientific and financial progress reports will be required to ensure significant progress and appropriate expenditure of funds. Funding will be provided for operational costs only. All funded projects are expected to lead to applications for external funding and additional grants for ongoing funding following the pilot period of the projects.

The Discovery Fund Seed Funding Competition is interested in funding projects focused on applying concepts of clinical research to better identify, diagnose and treat mental illnesses. Projects will be assessed and awarded under the research themes below, listed alphabetically. These research themes have equal weight of importance and no theme is more superior or favoured over another.

1. Basic and pre-clinical neuroscience
2. Brain and/or behaviour interventions (including technology-based interventions)
3. Clinical measure and/or biomarker identification
4. Health services research
5. Implementation science
6. Translating and extending clinical neuroscience (i.e. the study of mechanisms of disease and new ways of diagnosis and treatments) into clinical research

In addition, CAMH research strategic directions are listed below. All applications should identify the relationship to at least one of these three priority areas:

- 1. Suicide Rate Reduction**
 - a. Community/public health-based interventions
 - b. Hospital-based interventions
- 2. Reducing Disability Associated with Mental Disorders and Addictions**

- a. Addressing cognitive dysfunction associated with mental disorders and addictions across the lifespan
- b. Decreasing disability associated with depression and other common disorders

3. Improving Psychosis Prevention and Outcomes

- a. Primary prevention/early intervention
- b. Improving functional outcomes associated with chronic psychotic illness

These priority directions are general and inclusive of all of the above research themes, as well as a wide range of content areas. For example:

- mental disorders include all areas of addiction as stand-alone or as comorbid conditions
- applications focused broadly on disability are eligible including, as examples:
 - o applications focused on biological and mechanistic studies on disability, such as those on focused on cognitive dysfunction
 - o applications focused on disability with highly prevalent mental disorders, such as depression or substance-related disorders
 - o applications focused on disability as observed among populations with severe mental illnesses that align with concepts of recovery

Eligibility Criteria

- Principal Investigators must be appointed at the level of Assistant Professor and currently employed at CAMH as a Clinician Scientist or Independent Scientist.
- Principal Investigators cannot hold two awards simultaneously through the Discovery Fund Seed Funding mechanism.
- Collaborative Projects: for projects to be considered for collaborative, two Principal Investigators are required, typically from two different departments within University of Toronto or from two different universities or institutions. Two PIs from different hospitals in Toronto but both within University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry would be eligible but not ideal.
- **Women and members of under-represented minorities are strongly encouraged to apply.**

Review Process and Evaluation

- The review and selection of the funded projects will be conducted by an internal and external panel of senior scientists and research leadership. CAMH Research leadership will work with successful Principal Investigators to ensure projects are slated for success at the operational and budgetary level.
- Principal Investigators must demonstrate how the funds are the most suitable source of funding for their project, in relation to other available research grants (both internally and externally to CAMH); a need for funding must be shown. Equipment, research personnel salary, and technical support are typical budget requests, but Principal Investigator should identify costs specific to their research and setting. Principal Investigator salary is ineligible.

- The application should enable reviewers to determine eligibility of the Principal Investigator; judge the independence of the idea and productivity; establish the relevance of the proposal to the CAMH strategic priorities listed and demonstrate the originality and scientific promise of the investigator.
- Principal Investigators are encouraged to comment on their plan to integrate the data collected through the funded project with other data collected at CAMH. Principal Investigators may be asked also to utilize standardized data collection pipelines and to contribute data to the Neuroinformatics Platform.

Application Requirements

Applications must be prepared in the following order, and include a separate page for each section (where specified), labelled accordingly:

- a) **Letter of Intent:** A maximum of 500 words to be submitted by February 18th using the following link <https://form.jotform.com/DiscoveryFund/SeedFundingLetterofIntent>
- b) **Research Assurances and Approvals Form (RAAF):** submitted to the Research Services Office by March 25, 2018. The RAAF must include a list of proposed co-investigators, a project summary, and a budget breakdown and justification. For guidance on RAAF submission, please see the [Research Portal](#). Please note: Similar to all other granting opportunities, RAAFs must be presented at divisional research meetings one month prior to submission;
- c) **Abstract:** Maximum 250-word lay language description of the research outlining the background, objectives and hypotheses, methods and significance. **If the proposal is funded, this material may be used in CAMH Foundation announcements;**
- d) **Proposal:** a maximum of two pages standard type with no appendices (figures, tables, diagrams, etc., must be included within this page limit) to describe the project **background**, clearly specify **hypotheses**, outline the **specific research plan, and describe the project's alignment with Discovery Fund research themes and CAMH research priority areas;**
- e) **References:** a separate page listing up to 10 bibliographical references;
- f) **Budget Justification:** a separate page (maximum of 500 words) specifying the amount requested with a brief justification. Requests must not exceed \$100,000 per year. Grants can have smaller budgets and be as competitive as larger grants. Please specify budget for both years of funding. **Specific assurance that receipt of this award will not result in duplication of funding is required.** Other support (received or pending) must be included;
- g) **Collaborator Letter/s (optional):** letters of commitment from essential project collaborators (not solely letters of reference), addressed to the Principal Investigator briefly explaining the specific contribution and confirming a willingness to collaborate (only necessary if Principal Investigator will utilize collaborators). The scanned document/s depicting a signature should be submitted electronically;
- h) **Curriculum Vitae:** NIH-style biosketch for the Principal Investigator(s).
- i) **Career Interruption (optional):** Principal Investigator(s) can include a paragraph (maximum 500 words) describing any career interruption that could have affected productivity.

Formatting Requirements

The following formatting requirements must be followed for an application to be considered eligible:

- Applications must be submitted electronically as a single PDF
- Use a minimum font size of 11 point
- Insert a margin of 0.75" around the page
- Include a header with the Principal Investigators name in the upper right corner, and the proposal title in the upper left corner
- Each section must be labeled accordingly and presented in the order specified under Application Requirements
- Observe space limitations. Supplemental material and material exceeding the specified length will not be considered in the review process.

Submission Instructions

Applications must follow the presentation standards outlined above, and be submitted to Lina Chiuccariello at Lina.Chiuccariello@camh.ca by **April 1, 2019**.

**REB approval for human and pre-clinical subjects will need to be verified before releasing the funds for successful awards, as will institutional acceptance of the Discovery Fund Terms of Award.