Weston Family Foundation

FAQ:

This FAQ aims to address common inquiries related to the Brain Health: Sleep 2023 program. However, we encourage you to refer to the Program Details document for more in-depth information. If you have any project specific questions (e.g., whether an idea is in-scope), please contact us directly via email.

Who is the Foundation's main contact for the program?

Applicants who have questions about the program or wish to discuss specific project details can reach out to Dr. Rene Prashad at rene.prashad@westonfoundation.ca

When will applicants be notified of awards?

Award notification is expected around mid-March 2024, however, the Foundation may change the timeline of the application process should it encounter unforeseen circumstances or delays. Though this is unlikely, the Foundation will make every effort to broadly communicate any timeline changes.

When should projects begin?

We suggest factoring at least 1 month for contracting of grant agreements after receiving the award notice. Sometimes, extra time may also be needed to address project revisions as requested by the review committee. Therefore, a reasonable project start date is 1-2 months after the award notification.

Is matched funding (cash or in-kind) expected from institutions for this program?

No.

How will funds be administered for teams with applicants from more than one institution?

Funds of awarded projects will only be provided to the institution of the Principal Applicant who must be based at a Qualified Donee institution as per the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The Principal Applicant's institution is responsible for dispersing funds according to the project deliverables.

Will a percentage of funds be available at the start of the project for project start-up costs?

Yes, but budget details are not required in the Letter of Intent (LOI). If invited to submit a full Proposal, applicants can request a small amount of funds to cover start-up costs (e.g., REB submissions, purchasing reagents) in the Milestones section of the application. More details about how to complete the Proposal application template will be provided to those who are successful following the LOI stage.

How many grants will the program fund?

A total of four projects, each funded up to a maximum of $1.2M is the target. However, the review committee may recommend less than four applications depending on the quality and suitability of applications received.

Can an applicant submit more than one application?

Yes, applicants can submit more than one application as a Principal Applicant, co-Applicant, and/or Collaborator. Current or past Foundation grantees can also submit applications. *For more information about applicant eligibility, please refer to Section 5 of the Program Details document.*

Does the Principal Applicant need to be working at least 50% of time at a CRA qualified donee institution?

Yes. *For more information, about the eligibility of applicants, co-applicants, and collaborators, please refer to Section 5 of the Program Details document.*

Can collaborators be based outside of Canada?

Yes. However, it is expected that the majority of work will be conducted at a CRA qualified donee institution located in Canada. *For more information, about the eligibility of Principal Applicants, Co-applicants, and Collaborators, please refer to Section 5 of the Program Details document.*

Can collaborators be from industry?

Yes, but the Principal Applicant must be a researcher working in Canada at least 50% of the time and hold a position at or above the level of Assistant Professor or equivalent at a CRA qualified donee institution located in Canada. *For more information, please refer to Section 5 – Eligibility of Applicants of the Program Details document.*

Can an observational or interventional study be conducted on healthy individuals?

Yes, however, to meet the funding goals of this program, it is critical that the proposed work can demonstrate how, if successful, it can accelerate the development of sleep-based strategies to reduce the risk or slow progression of one or more neurodegenerative diseases of aging. *For more information, please refer to Section 1 – Scope and other Project considerations, and Section 11 – Foundation definitions, of the Program Details document.*

Will applications that benefit public health be of value to this program?

Projects that can demonstrate downstream positive impact on public health or generate evidence to shape health policies are important. This is why we ask applicants to briefly outline a knowledge mobilization plan in both the LOI and Proposal that describes how the proposed work could one day lead to changes regarding policy, practice and/or product.

Do all clinical sites of a multisite study need to be in Canada?

No. A proportion of the funds can be used for unique international resources (e.g., in-licensing IP, costs associated with accessing a database, or supporting the Canadian portion of collaborations with members from other geographies). However, it is expected that the majority of the funds will go towards work conducted in Canada. *For more information, please refer to Section 2 – Funding Specifications, and Section 5 – Eligibility of Applicants, of the Program Details document.*

How do you define preliminary data?

As noted in the Program Details document, preliminary or pilot data is required for this program, and is any data (from the applicants' lab or the literature) that can support the rationale, hypothesis and feasibility of the proposed work. Preliminary data can be based on results from human or animal studies, however, experimental design within the application that uses animal models or data is not in scope of this program.

Are the use of animal models permitted for the program?

The experimental design of projects using animal models or data derived from animal models is not in scope of the program. However, *preliminary* data can be based on results from animal models if it can support the rationale, hypothesis and experimental feasibility of the proposed study.

Is tool validation in scope for this program?

Yes, but please refer to Section 1 – Scope and other Project considerations, in the Program Details document for more information about what is in/out of scope.

Are all considerations listed in the Program Details document mandatory if a project is planning to use an existing sleep technology to acquire sleep-related measures?

No, it is not mandatory that all considerations listed in the Program Details be addressed. However, we strongly encourage you to consider the points noted as best as possible when choosing a sleep technology and to provide a clear justification for selecting a particular technology as part of your experimental design.

Are letters of support required at the Letter of Intent (LOI) phase?

Letters of support are only required at the Proposal phase.

Are partnerships required for submission of an application?

Partnerships are not mandatory. However, we encourage applicants to build collaborations as necessary to ensure the project team has the expertise needed to successfully execute the proposed work. If a particular expertise is missing at the time of the LOI submission, it can still be added at the Proposal phase, if the applicant is invited to submit a full Proposal.

What expertise is on the review panel?

The review panel consists of an international group of experts covering a range of different areas of sleep and neurodegenerative diseases of aging research.