Weston Family Foundation

Rapid Response 2025 Program
Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ aims to address common inquiries related to the Rapid Response 2025 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.

General

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 send their inquiries to info@westonbrain.org.

When will applicants be notified of awards?

Award notification is expected in November 2025; however, the Foundation may change the timeline of the application process should it encounter unforeseen circumstances or delays. The Foundation will make every effort to broadly communicate any timeline changes.

When should projects begin?

A reasonable project start date is 1-2 months after the award notification.

Scope

Is tool validation in scope for this program?

Yes. For more information about what is in/out of scope, please refer to *Section 1: Scope and Other Project Considerations* of the Program Details document.

Is the use of animal models in scope for this program?

The experimental design of projects using animal models or using data derived from animal models is in scope.

Do projects need to be at a specific stage in the drug discovery process to be in scope?

Projects need to be translational research as defined in *Section 11: Institute Definitions* of the Program Details document as "Applied research towards developing therapeutics for the prevention and/or treatment of human disease." As an example, for small molecule drug development, this spans target validation to phase II clinical trials.

Does the project need to include both preclinical models and human studies?

The project does not need to include both preclinical and human studies. However, if the goal is to eventually test the therapeutic in humans, then we strongly encourage that the preclinical model selected is relevant for the disease that the therapeutic is being developed for.

Are you accepting applications on lifestyle approaches?

Projects focused on lifestyle approaches (e.g., diet, physical activity) are not in scope for this RFA.

Are projects aimed at improving the quality of life of patients eligible?

Projects focused on the development of therapeutics for the symptomatic management of neurodegenerative diseases of aging (e.g., treatments for agitation in people with AD, treatments for apathy in people with FTD) are in scope. However, projects focused on patient care (e.g., an app to remind people to take their medication) to improve quality of life are not in scope.

Additionally, we do not accept tools that enhance quality of life. Tools should be those that accelerate translational development of therapeutics. For more information about what is in/out of scope, please refer to *Section 1: Scope and other Project Considerations* of the Program Details document.

Funding Specifications

Is matched funding (cash or in-kind) expected 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 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) qualified donee institution. 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 this program fund?

A maximum of six projects, each funded up to a maximum of $300,000 is the target. However, the review committee may recommend greater or less than six applications depending on the quality and suitability of applications received.

Can the budget be used to purchase equipment?

Funds cannot be used for large equipment purchases unless prior written approval from the Foundation has been obtained. For more details on what costs are allowed, please refer to *Section 2: Funding Specifications* of the Program Details Document.

Application Process

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.

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

Letters of support are only required at the Proposal phase.

How do you define preliminary data?

Preliminary data is defined as any data, from the applicants' lab or the literature, that can support the rationale, hypothesis and/or feasibility of the proposed work. Preliminary data can be based on results from human or animal studies.

Review Criteria

What expertise is on the review panel?

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

When should any confidential information be disclosed, at the LOI or Proposal stage?

Non-disclosure agreements are signed by all reviewers before any Letter of Intent (LOI), or Proposal is received for review. However, the decision of when to disclose confidential information is left to the applicant. Please note that, to be competitive, sufficient relevant information must be provided to ensure reviewers are able to adequately assess the feasibility, impact, and innovation of the idea.

What is the anticipated success rate at the LOI vs full Proposal stages, based on past competitions?

In the past, about 10-15% of LOIs are invited to submit a Proposal, and 30-50% of Proposals are funded. At the LOI phase, we are focused on the scientific merit (e.g., impact, innovation) of ideas that are in scope. For more details about the review criteria at the LOI phase, please refer to *Section 4: Review Criteria* of the Program Details document.

Eligibility of Applicants

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: Eligibility of Applicants* of the Program Details document.

Can collaborators be based outside of Canada?

Yes. However, it is expected that most of the 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: Eligibility of Applicants* 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.

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 and resources 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.

Does the Foundation accept applications where the PI is at a college, not a university?

To be eligible:

1) The institution (e.g., college) of the Principal Applicant or Co-Applicant must be a CRA-qualified donee institution in Canada.
2) 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. Co-applicants and collaborators must be at the post-doctoral level or above.
3) Collaborators can be working outside of Canada.

Can scientists at Government R & D institutions such as the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) apply?"

See answer above.

Can the PI be both an academic researcher and part of a for-profit start-up?

Yes. However, please note that any eligible 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 details on applicant eligibility, please refer to *Section 5: Eligibility of Applicants* of the Program Details document.

Other

Do all clinical sites of a multi-site study need to be in Canada?

No. A proportion of the funds can be used for unique international resources. However, it is expected that many 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* sections of the Program Details document.