



Weston Family Foundation

Proof-of-Principle 2025 Program Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) addresses common inquiries related to the Proof-of-Principle (POP) 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.

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 an email to microbiome@westonfoundation.ca addressed to Dr. Caroline Seiler.

When will applicants be notified of awards?

Awarded applicants will be notified in October 2025, however, the Foundation may change the timeline of the application process should there be unforeseen circumstances or delays. The Foundation will make every effort to broadly communicate any timeline changes.

When should projects begin?

If awarded, applicants must ensure that the grant agreement is reviewed and signed within **two weeks** of notification of selection. Therefore, a reasonable project start date is four – six weeks after the award notification.

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

No, matched funding is not expected for this program.

Can an applicant hold additional grants for their proposed project?

Yes, so long as the activities outlined in the application are distinct from those in other funded grants.

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. *Please refer to the [Program Details](#) document for additional information.*

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

costs?

Yes, 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 funding to cover start-up costs (e.g., REB submissions, purchasing reagents) in the “Milestones” section of the application. Further details regarding the Proposal application will be provided to those who are successful following the LOI stage.

How many grants will the program fund?

The Foundation will fund approximately ~ 12-13 projects for this program, each receiving up to \$300,000. However, the review committee may recommend funding more or less than 12-13 projects depending on the quality and suitability of applications received.

Which projects qualify for the up to \$300,000 budget and which qualify for the up to \$200,000 budget?

Projects that involve active patient engagement and testing are eligible for up to \$300,000 of funding. Projects that do not work with patients (e.g. biobanked samples, animal studies, *in vitro/ex vivo* experiments) are eligible for up to \$200,000 of funding. If you are unsure which funding stream is correct for your project, reach out to the Foundation’s main contact for the program.

Can an applicant submit more than one application?

Applicants may submit a maximum of one application, when acting as a Principal Applicant, to the program. Applicants may appear as a Co-Applicant or Collaborator on any number of applications. Current or past Foundation grantees can also submit applications. *For more information about applicant eligibility, please refer to the “Eligibility of Applicants” section of the [Program Details](#) document.*

Can a Postdoctoral Fellow be a Principal Applicants?

No, Postdoctoral Fellows are not eligible to apply as Principal Applicants, but can be co-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 the “Eligibility of Applicants” section of the [Program Details](#) document.*

Can Collaborators be based outside of Canada?

Yes. However, it is expected that the majority of work 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 the “Eligibility of Applicants” section 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 the “Eligibility of Applicants” section of the [Program Details](#) document.*

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 (e.g., in-licensing IP, costs associated with accessing a database). However, it is expected that the majority of the funds will go towards work conducted in Canada. *For more information, please refer to the “Funding Specifications” and “Eligibility of Applicants” sections of the [Program Details](#) document.*

Are research ethics or trial approval required to be in place before the project start date?

Relevant research ethics and trial approvals must be in place no later than **two months** after the start date of the project. *For more information, please refer to the “Regulatory and Ethics Approval” section of the [Program Details](#) document.*

How do you define preliminary data?

As noted in the [Program Details](#) document, preliminary or pilot data is optional 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, animal, or *in vitro* studies.

Is the use of animal models permitted for the program?

The experimental design of projects using animal models or data derived from animal models is within scope of the program. However, please note that the Foundation prioritizes projects that involve human participants, organoids, or human-derived samples.

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 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.

What expertise is on the review panel?

The review panel consists of an international group of experts covering a range of different areas of microbiome research, therapeutic development, and lifestyle research.

What happens if my team is selected? When can we announce that we've received funding?

We completely understand wanting to share the news with your network once you've received funding and encourage you to do so! The only caveat is that you and your team will need to wait until the Foundation announces all the grantees we've funded under a specific program. You'll also need to send any press releases or social posts using our logo to us for approval. You can refer to your grant agreement for more details.