



Weston Family
Foundation

Microbiome Innovations for New Therapies: MINT Frequently Asked Questions

This document aims to address common inquiries related to the program. Please refer to the Program Details document for more in-depth information.

General

1. Who is eligible to apply?

All Weston Family Foundation funding is given to projects that can further the Foundation's charitable purpose. As such, the Weston Family Foundation welcomes proposals from any qualified donee, in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency and Income Tax Act.

Non-qualified donees may apply to the LOI stage of Weston Family Foundation programs as a principal applicant but continued progression to the Proposal stage will be contingent on strong and compelling alignment with the program's criteria as well as approval by the Weston Family Foundation following an internal due diligence review on the organization.

Non-qualified donees may also be listed as collaborators on project applications where the principal applicant is a CRA qualified donee.

2. What are the key dates for this program?

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| • Information Webinar(s) | Tuesday, September 15, 2026 2pm ET
Tuesday, October 6, 2026 2pm ET |
| • Letter of Intent Deadline | Friday, October 30, 2026 2pm ET |
| • Proposal Deadline* | Monday, February 15, 2027 2pm ET |
| • Award Announcement** | April 2027 |

** Proposal deadline is only relevant should the application progress through the letter of intent phase of the program.*

***Note 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.*

3. How much funding is available and what is the timeframe?

In Stage I, projects can request up to \$500,000 to cover a period of 30 months. After 30 months, projects will have the opportunity to apply for up to \$2,000,000 to cover a period of 36 months as part of Stage II. Applicants are encouraged to structure projects to inform a potential funding expansion at the end of the grant.

4. What types of costs are eligible?

The bulk of budgeted costs must be project related and necessary to execute the project. This may include, but is not limited to salaries, materials, project-related travel expenses, project-related workshops, training or event expenses, permits or approvals, assessments, consulting services (e.g., regulatory, IP, or business strategy support), communication/outreach costs and other goods and services necessary to execute the project. Funds may not be used for overhead, operating expenses, capacity building, or saved as a contingency. Projects that advance to the next phase of funding may request up to 5% of overhead on top of their grant application.

5. Do all funds need to be spent in Canada?

No. A small proportion of the funds can be used for unique international goods and services (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 and goods and services acquired in Canada. For more information, please refer to the “Funding Specifications” and “Eligibility of Applicants” sections of the Program Details document.

6. How is the MINT program structured?

MINT consists of two Stage I funding calls. Up to 18 projects will be funded in 2026 (Grant Call 1) and up to 18 projects in 2027 (Grant Call 2). Grant Call 1 will launch in September 2026, with awarding planned for April 2027 and funding beginning in May 2027. Grant Call 2 will launch in September 2027, with awarding planned for April 2028 and funding beginning in May 2028. Each Stage I project may request up to \$500,000

over 30 months.

7. When should projects begin?

Projects must begin 3 months after the program's award announcement and must be completed within the approved project timeframe. The Foundation may change the timeline of the application process should there be unforeseen circumstances or delays and will make every effort to broadly communicate any timeline changes.

8. How many applications can I submit?

Principal Applicants/Organizations may submit one (1) application to the MINT grant program. Applicants/Organizations can be a co-applicant or collaborator on any number of applications. Current or past Foundation grantees are encouraged to submit applications for MINT. *For more information about applicant eligibility, please refer to the "Eligibility of Applicants" section of the Program Details document.*

9. How can I find out more about this program, the process or my application specifically?

The Foundation will be offering two online information sessions during which prospective applicants can learn more about the program. Webinar details can be found on the Foundation's website and social channels or in the key dates section above.

Any outstanding questions related to the program and associated LOI process may be directed to Dr. Caroline Seiler, Program Manager for the Microbiome Initiative (caroline.seiler@westonfoundation.ca).

Scope

a. What types of projects are being supported?

The MINT program supports translational microbiome research projects that advance microbiome-based interventions toward clinical and real-world application. Competitive projects focus on advancing a microbiome-based intervention by addressing key translational barriers such as efficacy in human-relevant systems, clinical feasibility, regulatory readiness, manufacturability, scalability, commercialization, or implementation. Projects involving human participants, human-derived samples, organoids, or other human-relevant models will be prioritized where appropriate. Examples of projects that are well aligned with the program include studies that validate a therapeutic microbiome

intervention in human-relevant settings or improve patient responses to existing therapies through microbiome modulation. MINT is intended to support projects that can form part of a longer-term development pathway toward clinically viable interventions with the potential to improve the health of Canadians.

b. What does the MINT mentorship program involve?

All funded MINT projects will participate in a mandatory mentorship program designed to help teams advance their interventions toward real-world clinical and/or commercial impact. Each project team will be matched with a relevant mentor with post-academic (ex., industry, regulatory, manufacturing) expertise to help address the needs of the project. Teams are anticipated to meet with their mentor quarterly throughout the grant period to discuss progress, translational barriers, key decision points, and opportunities to strengthen the project's pathway toward future development.

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

No, matched funding is not expected for this program.

d. 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.

e. 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. 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.*

f. How many grants will the program fund?

MINT will be delivered through two open calls, with the Foundation expecting to fund up to 36 Stage I projects in total. Up to 18 projects are expected to be funded through Grant Call 1 in 2026, with Grant Call 2 anticipated in 2027 to fund up to 18 additional projects. Each funded Stage I project may receive up to \$500,000 over 30 months. The number of grants awarded in each call may vary depending on the quality, suitability, and alignment of applications received. Applicants who are not funded in the first call may use the second anticipated

call as an opportunity to further develop and strengthen their project for future submission.

g. What happens after a Stage I project ends?

Upon successful completion of the Stage I funding phase, invited projects may apply for subsequent competitive funding of up to \$2M over 36 months as part of Stage II. Advancement is not guaranteed and will depend on project performance, translational progress, scalability, and future potential.

h. Are there expectations around commercialization pathways, partners, or intellectual property?

The purpose of MINT is to accelerate microbiome-based interventions toward real-world impact and to measurably improve the health and wellbeing of Canadians. For some projects, achieving this aim will require consideration of partnerships, commercialization pathways, regulatory or manufacturing needs, implementation strategies, and/or intellectual property. The Foundation does not expect every project to have a fully developed commercialization plan or industry partner at the time of application. However, applicants should show awareness of the key steps, expertise, partnerships, and resources that may be needed to advance their intervention beyond the grant period and toward clinical, commercial, or real-world impact. Intellectual property generated through the project will be managed by the applicant's institution according to its policies and any applicable grant agreement terms.

i. 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.*

j. 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 2 months after the start date of the project. If a grantee anticipates challenges meeting this timeline, they should contact the Foundation as early as possible to discuss next steps. Funding and project activities that require ethics or trial approval may be delayed until the necessary approvals are in place. *For more*

information, please refer to the “Regulatory and Ethics Approval” section of the Program Details document.

k. Can a post-doctoral fellow be a Principal Applicant?

No, post-doctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as Principal Applicants, but can be co-applicants.

l. 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.

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

No. Multi-site studies may include clinical sites outside of Canada where scientifically or operationally justified. However, at least one clinical site should be located in Canada, and the majority of project activities and funds are expected to support work conducted in Canada. Applicants should explain the role of any international sites and how the project will benefit Canadians.

n. How do you define preliminary data?

As noted in the Program Details document, preliminary or pilot data is optional for this program, and includes any data (from the applicant’s 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.

o. 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.

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

Letters of support are only required at the Full Proposal phase.

q. 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.

r. **What expertise is on the review panel?**

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

s. **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.