Objective

Since 2007, the Weston Family Awards in Northern Research have provided unparalleled support to early career scientists pursuing research in northern Canada. These annual awards are some of the most prestigious in the country for students pursuing a master's degree, a doctoral degree, or postdoctoral fellowship. Over 430 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows have been selected to receive an award since the program's inception, forming a community of Weston Family Northern Scientists who are at the forefront of northern scholarship and who are helping shape a better future for Canada and the world.

Weston Family Awards in Northern Research winners undertake projects across a broad spectrum of fields and disciplines in the natural sciences, including studies of northern ecosystems, biodiversity, flora and fauna, meteorology, oceanography, glaciology, geography, and environmental studies. Successful applicants should be able to demonstrate how their research contributes to protecting and restoring biodiversity in northern Canada, regardless of discipline, and should also be able to clearly articulate the need for their research and the impact it will have on northern communities.

Number, Value, and Duration of Scholarships

In the 2027 program year, the Weston Family Foundation will aim to support up to **five (5) awards for students at the postdoctoral level**. Each award is valued at **$130,000 over two (2) years** ($65,000 per year),

The tenure period for awards at the postdoctoral level begins **June 1, 2027**, and ends **May 31, 2029**.

Eligibility

Applicants to the **postdoctoral level** of the awards program must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada as of the application deadline;
- Be approved to start a postdoctoral fellowship at a Canadian university or eligible Canadian research institute under the supervision of a faculty member or research scientist as of the application deadline;
- Be pursuing research in the natural sciences with a focus on northern Canada;
- Have received approval for their research proposal, including any required ethical reviews and/or research licenses, by the time they start their award; and
- Complete all requirements for a doctoral degree by June 1, 2027, or have completed their doctoral degree no more than two years before the date of the application deadline (this period may be extended to three years if the applicant acquired at least six months of work experience in government or industry after they received their doctorate, or to six years if they withdrew from active research for parental leave for at least one year after they received their doctorate).

Please note that past recipients of the Weston Family Awards in Northern Research at the master's or doctoral level are eligible to apply for an award at the postdoctoral level. However, if you previously won a postdoctoral level award, you cannot reapply to the postdoctoral level competition (i.e., you can only receive a postdoctoral award once).

Field of Study/Program Requirements

Research projects from all natural science subject areas that contribute to improving our understanding of northern ecosystems and/or to supporting northern biodiversity conservation will be considered.

Projects **must include a field research component conducted by the applicant** in northern Canada within the term of the award.

Conditions and Restrictions

- Applicants must have the support of a supervisor (such as a faculty member or research scientist) at an accredited Canadian university or eligible Canadian research institute. Successful applicants must continue to be employed full-time with the university or research institute listed on their application throughout the tenure of their award. Any changes to research projects or project supervisors must be pre-approved by the Weston Family Foundation in order to continue receiving the award.
- Applicants cannot be supervised by the same person who oversaw their previous doctoral or postdoctoral research, even if the supervisor has changed universities or research institutes.
- Applicants cannot carry out their research at the same university where they obtained their doctoral degree.
- Applicants' research and fieldwork must relate to and take place in northern Canada, as defined by Brandt (2009). A map that defines these northern regions is available here: Weston Family Awards in Northern Research.
- Applicants with research or fieldwork outside of Canada must clearly demonstrate the relevance and benefit of the circumpolar fieldwork to Canadians and to Canadian northern scholarship. Such fieldwork must also fall within the North Circumpolar Region defined on the Natural Resources Canada website: MCR0001 Circumpolar Map
- Award payment will be issued in instalments and is to be used as a stipend.
- Successful applicants cannot hold this award concurrently with another major equivalent award (e.g., NSERC PDF) or employment (other than to teach the equivalent of one full course per year at the university where they are conducting their research). However, successful applicants can receive top-ups from their supervisor and/or research institution.
- Successful applicants may defer their award for a period up to 1 year, but only for reasons of parental-, illness, or health-related family responsibilities. Applicants may not defer their award in order to take up another award, to accept or hold employment, or to pursue studies other than those for which they received funding.

Selection Process

All applications are checked for basic eligibility before they are sent to an external Selection Committee for review. The Selection Committee reviews and ranks all eligible applications and then recommends award winners from the top applications to the Weston Family Foundation. Award winners will be notified of the results of the review process in early May 2027.

For postdoctoral level awards, the Selection Committee assesses applicants based on:

Research experience or promise:

- Evidence of interest in, and experience with, research in northern Canada, particularly in northern ecosystems and biodiversity conservation.
- Evidence of effort to pursue a career in a northern field.

Research proposal:

- Proposal is based in the natural sciences and shows how the research was co-designed or co-developed with northern and/or Indigenous communities.
- Proposal clearly defines the research goals and methods.
- Proposal is based on research that is timely, novel, and has the potential to make important advances in the field of study.
- Proposal clearly shows how the research will improve understanding of northern ecosystems and biodiversity conservation.
- Proposal identifies the applicant's role within the research project as well as the significance of their contribution.

Potential impact:

- Applicant shows the significance and potential impact of their research on the protection and restoration of biodiversity, not only within their field of study but also to Canada more broadly.
- Applicant shows some potential applications of their work beyond academia.
- Applicant demonstrates evidence of effort to have their research known within academia and beyond (i.e., evidence of a willingness to present their research results at scientific conferences and meetings as well as a willingness to promote public interest in the importance of northern scientific endeavours).

How to Apply

Applicants can prepare and submit an application through the online portal below.

Weston Family Foundation Application Portal

Applicants must create an account on the online portal. The account will allow them to upload and save information as well as track the progress of their application. **Please note that the online portal can only accept applications in English**.

Applicants should be aware that there are three parts to the application for the postdoctoral awards, as indicated below. **All three parts must be received before Thursday, January 14, 2027 at 2:00 p.m. ET.** It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application and all supporting documents outlined below are submitted by this deadline. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applicants should also be aware that applications will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee and as such, it is to their advantage to keep technical terminology to a minimum.

Applicants will be notified by email once their application has been received.

The three parts to the application are:

1. **Application Form**
   Applicants must complete the application form. Please read the application guidelines and instructions carefully before completing the form.

2. **Reports and Letter of Support**
   Applicants must submit one (1) Supervisor Report, two (2) Referee Reports and one (1) Letter of Support.

   Applicants must ask their proposed research supervisor to complete the **Supervisor Report**.

   Applicants must ask two referees to complete the **Referee Reports**:
   - One of these referees must be an academic scholar who knows the applicant well.
   - The other must be a northern resident or community member capable of judging the methods, objectives, and merits of the project for Northern research (e.g., a territorial government scientist, academic living full-time in northern Canada, representative of an Indigenous government responsible for local licensing, etc.).

   The Selection Committee requires that the northern reference have a meaningful geographic and relevant research engagement in the jurisdiction where the project will take place. If possible, the northern reference should have a direct connection to the research and/or be able to comment on the proposed research plan.

   Applicants must ask an individual who can speak on behalf of the university/research institute where they plan to undertake their research to complete the **Letter of Support** (e.g., the dean of the faculty within which the student is working or a senior administrator responsible for research).

   The Supervisor Report, Referee Report, and Letter of Support templates are available for download from the online portal. Applicants must have each report completed and uploaded into the portal before the application deadline. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that each referee is advised well ahead of time that they will need to complete a report and that they have ample time to do so before the application deadline.

3. **Transcripts**
   Applicants are required to submit both their undergraduate transcripts as well as any applicable graduate level transcripts (including both past programs and programs currently in-progress). Please note that it can take several weeks for transcripts to be ordered and processed. It is highly recommended that transcripts be ordered well in advance to ensure they arrive on time and can be scanned/uploaded through the online portal before the application deadline.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be required to submit by mid May 2027:
- a photo of themselves, preferably in their research environment
- a short bio of themselves (see samples online: 2026 WFANR Award Winners)
- a signed award contract acknowledging their acceptance of the terms and conditions/restrictions of the award.

Successful applicants will also be required to create an account with a third-party payment processor and upload the following information in order to receive their award instalments:
- social insurance number (SIN)
- banking information

Successful applicants must submit progress reports (which include written and video components) as well as

confirmation of compliance forms before each instalment of their award can be processed (reporting guidelines and forms will be available for download in the online portal). It is the responsibility of award winners to keep the Weston Family Foundation informed of any changes to their contact information by updating their online record.

Successful applicants should also note that their names, biographical information, and photographs may be used in promotional initiatives for the Weston Family Foundation.

Payment

- Award payment will only be made once the successful applicant has completed the award acceptance process and the Weston Family Foundation has received all necessary documentation to authorize payment.

- Award payment will be made by a third-party payment processor on behalf of the Weston Family Foundation. **It is the responsibility of the successful applicant to submit their financial information to this third party in order to receive payments.**

- Award payment will consist of instalments paid to the successful applicant by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). **Please note that EFT payments can only be made to a Canadian bank account AND the bank account must be in the award recipient's name**. The breakdown of the instalments is as follows:

  Year 1
  - First instalment: $32,500
  - Second Instalment: $32,500

  Year 2
  - Third instalment: $32,500
  - Fourth instalment: $32,500

About Weston Family Foundation

At the Weston Family Foundation, more than 60 years of philanthropy has taught us that there's a relationship between healthy landscapes and healthy people. That's why we champion world-class health research and innovation with the same passion that we support initiatives to protect and restore biodiversity in our unique landscapes. We take a collaborative approach to philanthropy, working alongside forward-thinking partners to advance Canada and create lasting impacts. We aspire to do more than provide funding to enable others to find transformational ways to improve the well-being of Canadians.

Since the Foundation's beginning, each generation of our family has taken an active role in our grant-making to spark new ideas, shepherd promising initiatives, and scale ambitious projects. With every advance, we move forward together.

Contact Us

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