

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Epilepsy Canada

EPILEPSY CANADA NEW INVESTIGATOR AWARD

Promoting the Careers of New Investigators

Epilepsy Canada, with the support of CURE Epilepsy, is pleased to announce the 2023 Epilepsy Canada New Investigator Award. This investigator-initiated grant mechanism seeks to push the envelope and accelerate promising research leading to disease-modifying breakthroughs for people living with epilepsy. Epilepsy Canada and CURE Epilepsy prioritize highly innovative, risky, paradigm-shifting projects that address both organizations' mission to cure epilepsy, affirming our core belief that the only acceptable final goal is "no seizures, no side-effects."

Our sole mandate is to raise monies for epilepsy research with the objective of one day finding a cure.

FUND RESEARCH | FIND A CURE

Together, we identify and fund cutting-edge research, challenging scientists worldwide to collaborate and innovate in pursuit of this goal.

Our commitment is unrelenting.

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Epilepsy Canada seeks to promote the careers of new investigators to foster the growth of epilepsy research in Canada. This grant is intended to provide funding to allow more junior investigators to become competitive with more senior investigators in future granting opportunities. Researchers may propose basic or clinical studies, but this award mechanism is not intended to support clinical trials. Research that involves collaboration and a multidisciplinary approach is desirable. We encourage studies that will provide new directions for epilepsy therapy, prevention and, ultimately, a cure and that will allow applicants to collect the data necessary to support grant applications to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research or similar granting agency. Requests may be made for up to \$75,000 CDN for one year.

PRIORITY AREAS

Epilepsy Canada's priority research areas focus on those that have the potential to truly transform and save lives. Prevention, disease modification and elimination are critical goals and consistent with our mission.

- Transformative research to enhance our understanding of the cellular, molecular, genetic and systems-level mechanisms that lead to any of the epilepsies, facilitating the continued investigation of disease-modifying or preventative strategies
- Innovative approaches that can prevent, modify and/or arrest the development of acquired epilepsy. Examples include epilepsy that develops after stroke, tumor, traumatic brain injury or infection, including febrile infection-related epilepsy syndrome (FIRES) as well as new-onset refractory status-epilepticus (NORSE)
- Research that will inform the development of novel therapies to prevent onset or halt the progression of severe pediatric epilepsies
- Research focused on new, effective treatments for the >30% of the epilepsy population who are pharmaco-resistant
- Novel research that furthers our understanding of the causes and ultimate elimination of SUDEP
- Translational, clinical, and clinically informed basic research that will facilitate understanding of the cellular-, molecular-, and systems-level mechanisms that underlie the relationships between sleep and epilepsy
- Research that examines the intersection of epilepsy and the many comorbidities in people with epilepsy, including strategies to optimize quality of life with epilepsy

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicant must be a new investigator, as defined below, at the date of the application deadline.

New investigator is defined as:

Holding an appointment to a Canadian University or Hospital Institution and within **five years** of their first academic appointment. Academic appointment is defined as an appointment that allows an individual to apply for research grants as an independent investigator.

Researchers who use animals in their research – any vertebrates and certain invertebrates, in particular, cephalopods (octopi and squid) – must adhere to the policies and guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) as published in the two-volume CCAC Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals and in the guidelines and policies as published regularly on the CCAC website at www.ccac.ca. Institutions must hold a Good Animal Practice (GAP) certificate.

Applicants for the Epilepsy Canada New Investigator grant are not eligible to apply for the CURE Epilepsy Taking Flight award. Researchers who have already received significant funding (e.g., Canadian Institutes of Health Research – CIHR or equivalent) for their submitted project are not eligible for Epilepsy Canada funding.

Researchers may contact us with questions regarding eligibility at epilepsy@epilepsy.ca or 1-877-734-0873.

All materials must be submitted in English.

FUNDING CYCLE DETAILS

Activity	Approximate Dates
Request for Proposals	Monday, December 5, 2022
Letter of Intent Deadline	Monday, January 9, 2023
Full Application Invitations	Friday, February 17, 2023
Full Application Deadline	Friday, March 31, 2023
Anticipated Award Announcement	July, 2023
Anticipated Project Start Date	September, 2023

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BUDGET

Requests may be made for up to \$75,000 CDN for one year. Funding requests may include salary support for the Principal Investigator (PI), technical staff, supplies necessary to perform the work, animal costs, publication fees, and travel to an epilepsy-related conference if the PI is presenting their Epilepsy Canada-funded research. Funds are not to be used to purchase equipment. **Indirect costs are not supported.**

LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS

All applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI should clearly and succinctly outline the hypothesis to be tested, and the specific aims, and provide a brief description of the research plan according to the guidelines in this announcement.

Letter of Intent Instructions:

Below are instructions for the required **scientific summary** and **future directions**, which together can be no longer than two pages in length. **LOIs exceeding two pages of text will not be reviewed.**

- 1) **Scientific Summary:** Clearly and succinctly outline the hypothesis and specific aims and provide a brief description of how the proposed research plan aligns with Epilepsy Canada's mission and with its desire to push epilepsy research forward by leaps rather than by incremental steps (One and a half-page maximum).
- 2) **Future Directions:** Describe what next steps will be taken once the goals of your proposed project have been achieved (1/2-page maximum, including spaces).

A few points to note:

- It is important to keep in mind that a key factor that reviewers consider when assessing applications is feasibility. Lower scores will be given to proposals that are not realistically achievable within a one-year timeframe. The "Future Directions" section enables you to explain how your research will progress once the goals of your proposed project have been achieved.
- Graphs and charts do not count towards the two-page text description of your project.
- References are not required at the LOI phase. However, if you decide to include references, they do not count towards the page limitation.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Type font: 12-point.
- Type density: No more than 15 characters per inch (including spaces). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text should not exceed either 15 characters per inch or 114 characters per line.
- Spacing: Single-spaced between lines of text, no more than five lines of type within a vertical inch.
- Margins: Minimum of 0.5-inch top, bottom, right, and 1-inch left.

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LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL CENTRAL

LOIs must be submitted through proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>). To begin an application, applicants will need to create a professional profile, if one does not already exist.

Instructions for each section of the application in proposalCENTRAL:

- 1) *Title Page*: Enter proposal title (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).
- 2) *Download Templates & Instructions*: Find a copy of the guidelines for your reference.
- 3) *Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal*: Follow the instructions if you want to grant access to any other individuals.
- 4) *Applicant/PI*: This section should auto-populate from the applicant's professional profile. Double-check that the information is complete and correct. If it is not, click "Edit Professional Profile" to update the information.
- 5) *Institution & Contacts*: Information should auto-populate from the applicant's profile.
- 6) *Keywords*: Add at least 3 keywords that best describe the specific focus of your research proposal.
- 7) *Current and Pending Support*: List all current and pending support for you and any co-investigators. Pending support includes grants that have been submitted but for which decisions have not yet been communicated. Current and pending support is required for the PI and co-PI but is not required for collaborators.
- 8) *Attach LOI and Biosketch*: Once the LOI is finalized, attach it by uploading the PDF into this section of proposalCENTRAL. You should also upload your biosketch into Section 8 of the application. While your biosketch can be in CIHR format, please note that this formatting is not required.
- 9) *Validate*: The system will check for required components that have not been completed. Applicants will not be able to submit until all required components are completed.
- 10) *Submit*: Click "Submit" after your application has been successfully validated.

FULL PROPOSAL NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (10-PAGE LIMIT*)

Following review of LOIs, select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals and will be asked for the following:

Main Body of Proposal: Describe the project background, hypothesis and specific aims of the research, preliminary data, research plan detailing experimental design and methods, expected outcomes, potential pitfalls and interpretation(s) of outcomes of the research.

Mission: Include one paragraph detailing how the proposed research aligns with Epilepsy Canada's mission.

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References: Please list all literature cited within the proposal. References do not count toward the page limit.

It is important to keep in mind that a key factor that reviewers consider when assessing applications is feasibility. Lower scores will be given to proposals that are not realistically achievable within a one-year timeframe. The “Future Directions” section enables you to explain how your research will progress once the goals of your proposed project have been achieved.

Applications are evaluated for innovation, feasibility, scientific merit, relevance to grant mechanism, relevance to Epilepsy Canada’s mission, and potential to be transformative.

*The 10-page limit of the Proposal Narrative is inclusive of any figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, pictures, pictorials, cartoons, and other relevant information needed to judge the proposal.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Type font: 12-point
- Type density: No more than 15 characters per inch (including spaces). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text should not exceed either 15 characters per inch or 114 characters per line.
- Spacing: Single-spaced between lines of text, no more than five lines of type within a vertical inch.
- Margins: Minimum of 0.5-inch top, bottom, right, and 1-inch left.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

All individuals invited to submit full applications will be required to submit two letters of support: one letter of support from their Department Chair and one letter of support from a mentor or senior investigator/clinician familiar with the individual’s expertise, experience, and potential to develop an independent investigator-initiated research program.

FULL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL CENTRAL

Full proposals must be submitted through proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>).

To access your application, log in to proposalCENTRAL and go to the Manage Proposals tab. Select “edit” next to the approved LOI to start the full proposal application. Below are instructions for each section on the online application:

- 1) *Title Page:* Enter proposal title (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).
- 2) *Download Templates & Instructions:* You may access a copy of the award guidelines, ORCID ID instructions and a biosketch template (if you don’t already have one completed). Note – you may use CIHR biosketch format if preferred over the template provided.

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- 3) *Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal:* Use this optional section to grant access to co-investigators or collaborators so they may review or enter information into the application.
- 4) *Applicant/PI:* This section should auto-populate from your professional profile. Double-check that the information is complete and correct. If it is not, click “Edit Professional Profile” to update the information.
- 5) *Institution & Contacts:* Information should auto-populate from your profile.
- 6) *Letters of Reference* You are required to submit two letters of support: one from your Department Chair and one from a mentor or senior investigator/clinician familiar with your expertise, experience, and potential to develop an independent investigator-initiated research program.
- 7) *Abstract:* Answer the questions in each box according to the instructions below:
 - a. *Lay Summary:* The lay summary will be reviewed by lay reviewers selected by Epilepsy Canada. Please take special care to describe the proposed work and its potential impact on the field of epilepsy in language appropriate for a nonscientific audience. Include the following:
 - i. *Project Goals:* Bulleted list of the goal(s) of the project.
 - ii. *Aims:* Bulleted list of how those goals will be tested.
 - iii. *Deliverables:* Bulleted list of tangible deliverables to result from this work if successful.
 - iv. *Impact:* Briefly explain how the project, if successful, will contribute to improved treatment, prevention, and cures. In this section, you may also explain the next steps in your research plan once the goals of your proposed project have been achieved.
 - b. *Scientific Summary:* Please provide a scientific abstract for your project.
- 8) *Budget Period Detail:* Provide a detailed budget. The budget maximum for this program is \$50,000 CDN for direct costs for one year. Include an itemized list of how funds will be used, e.g., materials, animals, salary, fringe benefits, disposables, maintenance, travel*. *Funds are not to be used to purchase equipment. Please note that indirect costs and institutional overhead are not provided.* All expenses must be in Canadian dollars (CDN).

*Note that there is a travel cap of \$1,500 CDN for international travel and \$1,000 CDN for domestic travel (within North America) per year, which can be budgeted for a maximum of 2 investigators.
- 9) *Budget Summary and Justification:* Review the summarized budget to make sure that details have been entered correctly. Provide budget justification statement. The budget justification should clearly detail how and where the funds will be used and why these expenditures are critical to the success of the proposed research.
- 10) *Current and Pending Support:* Provide all current and pending support for key personnel. Please indicate if there is any overlap with the proposed work.

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- 11) *Organization Assurances:* Answer the questions regarding intended use of human subjects, animals, recombinant DNA, and the possession of a Schedule 1 license, if appropriate for the research proposal.
- 12) *Proposal Narrative and Other Attachments:* Upload the following documents:
 - a. Proposal Narrative.
 - b. Description of facilities available at the PI's institution.
 - c. Biosketch for PI. You may use CIHR biosketch format if preferred over the template provided.
 - d. Signed signature pages: Upload signed signature pages which are generated in Step 15 of the application.
- 13) *ORCID ID:* Epilepsy Canada and CURE Epilepsy now require an ORCID ID with all full proposal submissions. If your ORCID ID is not already provided on this page, enter an ORCID identifier in your Professional Profile by clicking "Edit Professional Profile". Detailed instructions may be accessed in Step 2 of the online application – *Download Templates & Instructions*.
- 14) *Validate:* The system will check for required components that have not been completed. You will not be able to submit until all required components are completed.
- 15) *Signature Page(s):* Click "print signature page" to obtain a PDF of the document that needs to be signed by you (the submitting PI) and an institutional representative. After signatures have been collected, scan the signature page and upload to Section 12.
- 16) *Submit:* Please **make sure to click "submit"** once your application has been validated by the system.

Inquiries: Questions regarding these guidelines are welcome and should be directed to epilepsy@epilepsy.ca or 1-877-734-0873.

APPLICANT FAQs

Answers to a series of frequently asked questions may be found below. If, after reviewing, additional clarification is needed, please reach out to epilepsy@epilepsy.ca or 1-877-734-0873.

Q Are multiple researchers from the same institution allowed to apply for the same grant?

A Yes. There is no limit to the number of researchers from the same institution who may apply for the same grant.

Q I am interested in submitting a LOI for an Epilepsy Canada award with a scientist who is currently funded by Epilepsy Canada or CURE Epilepsy. Is this allowed?

A Yes, you may apply for an open award as long as your co-PI would not be receiving salary from the current award by the start date of the new award for which you are applying. Grantees may not receive funding on two different awards at the same time.

Q I received an Epilepsy Canada or CURE Epilepsy grant in the past. May I apply again?

A Yes. You are welcome to apply for a grant as a current/former Epilepsy Canada or CURE Epilepsy grantee. It should be noted, however, that a current grantee may not receive funding on two different awards at the same time. So, you may apply for a new award as long as the funding for the new award would begin after your current award has ended.

Q May I apply for an award if I am an active reviewer for Epilepsy Canada or CURE Epilepsy?

A Yes. If you are an active reviewer, you may still apply for an award. We will ensure that you are not assigned to applications in the award category for which you applied.

Q If I am submitting with another researcher, do we both need to apply?

A Epilepsy Canada and CURE Epilepsy welcome collaborative proposals with more than one principal investigator. However, one application must be submitted on behalf of the collaboration, under one PI's account.

Q Can multidisciplinary funding be split between two institutions?

A Yes, funding may be divided among multiple institutions. However, Epilepsy Canada will only contract with the primary institution, which will be responsible for negotiating subcontracts with the institutions of any co-PIs involved with the project. Epilepsy Canada requires detailed budgets outlining the allocation of funds to each institution.

Q Who may receive salary from the grant?

A Grant funds may be allocated to cover the salaries of investigators, postdocs, graduate students and research team staff in relation to the percentage effort spent on the project, as well as research supplies and some travel expenses. **Indirect costs are not covered.**

Q May grant funds be used for travel expenses?

A Yes. There is a travel cap of \$1,000 CDN for domestic travel and \$1,500 CDN for international travel per year which may be budgeted for a maximum of 2 investigators (the PI and co-PI).

Q If I cannot submit by the deadline, may I request an extension?

A No, Epilepsy Canada and CURE Epilepsy do not provide deadline extensions