

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued By
Parkinson Canada

CLINICIAN SCIENTIST RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (2027 Cycle)

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Important Changes to the 2027 Competition

1. **Community Informed Research Priority Area:** Parkinson Canada will fund at least one project that is focused on movement and physical symptoms and at least one project that is focused on cognition and mental health. More details are provided below.
2. **Lay Summary and Impact Statement:** New and revised application components have been introduced, including a required lay summary to support clear communication of research to a broad audience, as well as updates to the project impact and patient engagement statements to

strengthen the emphasis on meaningful impact and engagement with people affected by Parkinson's.

BACKGROUND

Parkinson Canada believes that leadership in programs of care for those with Parkinson's disease is best assumed by medical neurologists or neurosurgeons with special experience, both in the critical management of Parkinson's and in its research. This leadership entails a capacity to work with the various agencies and disciplines involved in the care of individuals with Parkinson's to facilitate the development of better treatments for those with Parkinson's. Relative to the current needs of Canadians with Parkinson's, there is currently a shortage of leaders involved in Parkinson's service and research programs in Canada. Parkinson Canada believes this leadership shortage has the potential to worsen in the next few years.

Parkinson Canada is pleased, therefore, to offer its Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship Program (the "Program") as a strategic initiative to encourage promising young medical professionals to become future leaders in the field of Parkinson's Disease therapeutic management and research. Parkinson Canada intends to provide awards in the amount of \$50,000 or 75,000 per year over a two-year term to outstanding medical professionals who meet the eligibility criteria of the Program and who have been approved by its Trainee Award Committee (the "Trainee Committee"). Funds awarded under the Program are to be used to cover salary, benefits, and expenses for research fellowships in Parkinson's-related areas.

Through this initiative, Parkinson Canada invites fellowship applications from applicants committed to conducting significant biomedical or clinical research in areas relevant to the cure, cause, prevention, improved treatment and/or understanding of Parkinson's disease, while concurrently undergoing clinical training. This initiative is consistent with, and reflects, Parkinson Canada's commitment to support innovation and renewal in the national Parkinson's research field and to foster international leadership potential in this area.

The Program is available to individuals who possess a doctoral qualification (MD) in medicine. Funding for post-MD research fellowships (without clinical training) may be made available through the postdoctoral research fellowship program, to provide support for applicants whose primary focus is research and are not pursuing clinical training/practice. Applicants seeking support for further clinical fellowship training (without a significant research component) should apply to Parkinson Canada's Clinical Movement Disorders Fellowship.

RESEARCH THEMES OF PARKINSON CANADA

Parkinson Canada provides funding to support projects across all fields of research related to Parkinson's Disease. The following Research Themes (described below) have been developed for the purposes of internal tracking and reporting broadly on our research funding history and trends. In your application, you will be asked to choose a primary Research Theme which aligns with your project.

- **Movement & Physical Symptoms:** research into the motor features of Parkinson's, including tremor, rigidity, balance impairment, falls, and freezing of gait (e.g., studies on freezing episodes or fine motor tasks such as buttoning a shirt).
- **Sleep & Energy:** research into sleep disturbances and fatigue associated with Parkinson's (e.g., REM sleep behaviour disorder, vivid dreaming, and chronic tiredness).
- **Body Functions:** research into autonomic and other bodily dysfunctions in Parkinson's (e.g., constipation, orthostatic hypotension, changes in sexual function).

- **Speech & Swallowing:** research into communication and swallowing difficulties in Parkinson's (e.g., softened voice, dysphagia, drooling).
- **Thinking & Mental Health:** research into cognitive and psychiatric aspects of Parkinson's (e.g., memory or concentration difficulties, anxiety, depression, dementia).
- **Better Treatments:** development of improved symptomatic and surgical therapies for Parkinson's (e.g., medications with more consistent efficacy or fewer side effects, personalized care approaches, deep brain stimulation, Disease Modifying Therapies).
- **Understanding & Detecting Parkinson's Earlier:** research into the underlying causes and risk factors of Parkinson's to enable detection before or soon after symptom onset (e.g., biomarkers, improved diagnostic tests).
- **Everyday Life & Independence:** interventions, tools, and programs that help people with Parkinson's stay independent and maintain quality of life, including support for family and carers (e.g., exercise programs, assistive technologies, caregiver resources).
- **Fair Access to Care:** research into equitable delivery of healthcare services for people with Parkinson's (e.g., ensuring comparable quality of care in rural or remote areas).
- **Women's Experiences of Parkinson's:** research into how hormones and biological sex influence the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of Parkinson's (e.g., effects of menopause on disease presentation).

FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Program offers awards in the amount of either \$50,000 or \$75,000 per year over a two-year term to exceptional eligible applicants who have been approved for funding by the Trainee Committee.

Clinical Training Level	Award Value
Medical Residency	\$50,000/year
Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year

COMMUNITY INFORMED RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA

Parkinson Canada is committed to ensuring that research reflects what matters most to the people it serves. This year, we surveyed members of the Parkinson's community, including people living with Parkinson's and their care partners, to better understand which areas of research they feel need more attention. The results of this survey are directly shaping our funding competition and two priority areas emerged from the community:

Movement and physical symptoms: This could include projects related to tremor, balance and falls, stiffness, freezing, gait, involuntary movements, fine motor skills, among other topics.

Cognition and mental health: This could include projects related to cognition, mild cognitive impairment, dementia, memory and concentration, stress, anxiety, depression, among other topics.

In the 2027 annual research competition, Parkinson Canada will fund at least one project that is focused on movement and physical symptoms and at least one project that is focused on cognition and mental health. Applications that do not explicitly address a research question focused on one of these two community-identified priority areas will not be considered under this funding priority.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Partnership funding programs are available for this trainee award program. For more information on the available partnership programs, including funding amounts, award durations, and additional application procedures, please visit our ['Apply for Funding'](#) webpage.

ELIGIBILITY

Parkinson Canada wishes to support training excellence and development of the wide scope of Parkinson's research in Canada. Applications will be accepted from applicants who meet the eligibility criteria summarized below and who propose to continue their training or conduct research at an "Approved Institution" - Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions, including hospitals and research institutes; or other organizations, as determined by the Research and Clinical Advisory Committee of the Board of Directors of Parkinson Canada in consultation with the Trainee Committee, provided that the applicant's research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of Parkinson Canada.

- Applicants must hold a doctoral degree (MD) in medicine, must be graduates of and must have completed training at a university recognized by Parkinson Canada. Applicants must also be in pursuit of either: **residency training** or **clinical fellowship training** in either clinical neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry or geriatrics. Applicants must be eligible for postgraduate medical training (residents) or licensed to practice in Canada (clinical fellows).
- In addition, the applicant's proposed training program should include a significant time commitment (at least 20%-time commitment) towards research of Parkinson's Disease.
- International applicants are encouraged to apply; however, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and/or applicants intending to remain in or relocate to Canada to continue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the fellowship.
- Those who are currently funded by a Parkinson Canada grant, award or fellowship, with outstanding reporting requirements are ineligible to apply. Those who have previously been funded through a Parkinson Canada Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship, are also ineligible to apply.

Eligibility Table for Trainee Awards

Program	Degree Held	Research Being Pursued	Clinical Training Level	Award Value & Term
Graduate Student Award	BSc	Yes	NA	\$40,000/year - 2 years
Postdoctoral Research Fellowship	PhD (or MD)	Yes	NA	\$70,000/year - 2 years
Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship	MD	Yes	Residency	\$50,000/year - 2 years
	MD	Yes	Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year - 2 years
Clinical Movement Disorders Fellowship	MD	NA	Movement Disorders Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year - 1 year

LOCATION OF TRAINING & SUPERVISION

Awards granted under this Program shall be held in trust by the Approved Institution at which the proposed supervisor of the successful applicant (an "Approved Supervisor") holds a faculty appointment.

An Approved Supervisor should be an individual who is a leader in the development of a Parkinson's program, actively directing research in the field of Parkinson's disease. An Approved Supervisor must be able to provide the successful applicant with a strong training environment in an academic health sciences centre with a well-established Parkinson's program in movement disorders. Other training locations may be considered by the Trainee Committee, provided that the facility is an Approved Institution and the clinical research or clinical research-related activities fall within the mandate of the Program.

Applicants proposing to train at an Approved Institution located outside Canada will be considered to be eligible to participate in the Program, provided that he or she is committed to returning to Canada to

pursue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the Program. Submission of an application under these conditions is deemed to be a binding pledge, and successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Parkinson Canada to this effect.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE (EDIJ)

Parkinson Canada is committed to advancing the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice throughout the organization. In the 2027 Research Competition, we are asking all applicants to complete a self-identification questionnaire, as a first step to better understand the demographics of our applicant pool and of our grant recipients.

We are complying with the highest standards of privacy and security to ensure that this deeply personal information is collected and stored in a secure manner. Our self-identification questionnaire closely mirrors the form used by federal funding agencies (E.g. CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC), and covers the same demographic dimensions. We are asking that all applicants to our research competition complete the questionnaire, but an applicant can choose the option “I prefer not to answer” for any question where they don’t feel comfortable sharing information.

The information from these self-identification questionnaires will only be accessed and reviewed after all applications have been fully reviewed and funding recommendations are completed, to ensure that this information will not be used to make any funding decisions. This personal information will only be reviewed by 1-2 staff members who have been trained in EDIJ principles.

All collected answers will be transferred into a de-identified aggregated format for internal review of our grant programs and to identify any major gaps where we are not reaching or attracting research applicants from historically underrepresented groups. We also promise that any data that we share with the public or key stakeholders from these findings will be in this de-identified aggregated format to protect the identity of individuals who have shared their personal information with us.

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

For Applicants: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that information included in their applications is true and accurate and that all information sources are correctly referenced. Applicants should be aware that generative AI tools may lead to the incorrect recognition of source publications. Applicants must state if and how generative AI has been used in the development of their application. In cases where generative AI has been used, the applicant must also review and confirm the accuracy of the content. Applicants should also be aware that most online AI tools retain submitted information, and that intellectual property or confidential information (including identifiable patient data) uploaded onto AI tools may be retained and used in the future by these tools. Any potentially sensitive data should be de-identified or anonymized prior to upload.

For Grant Reviewers: The use of publicly available generative AI tools is **strictly prohibited** for grant reviewers for evaluating grant applications. This includes using translation tools such as DeepL or creating summaries using ChatGPT. Uploading application materials into generative AI tools could result in breaches of privacy and the potential loss of custody of intellectual property and confidential information.

REVIEW PROCESS

The evaluation of Applications submitted to Parkinson Canada will be completed by the Trainee Committee through a peer review process. The Scientific Reviewers on the Trainee Committee are composed of prominent neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuropathologists and neuroscientists from

across Canada. The peer review process is a cornerstone of Parkinson Canada's research program and provides for the highest quality of objective adjudication.

The Trainee Committee is responsible for the evaluation of all Applications submitted to Parkinson Canada in response to this Request for Applications, to rate each of the Applications so that they may be ranked in order of priority for funding by Parkinson Canada. External reviewers will be solicited for additional expertise as needed. The Trainee Committee anticipates that it will provide each applicant whose Application to participate in the Program has been declined with written notice of such decision and where possible, a brief written critique of the substance of their Application.

In addition to our Scientific Reviewers, Parkinson Canada is proud to involve the voices of People affected by Parkinson's in the evaluation of all of our grants and awards. As a patient focused organization, we want to leverage the unique and valuable perspective of lived experience experts into our decisions on which projects will be funded. That way we can ensure that the identified needs and interests of people affected by Parkinson's are reflected in our research program. This year, our lived experience reviewers will review the Project Impact and Patient Engagement Statements and provide a score that will account for 20% of the overall application score. Their score will be based on the application's potential impact towards the lives of Canadians with Parkinson's and the applicant's efforts to engage the community of people affected by Parkinson's into the design of their project and their knowledge dissemination efforts.

The PLEX Advisory Group will hold 2 virtual meetings in Aug. - Sept. where interested applicants will be able to meet with and get feedback from past lived experience experts on their applications as it pertains to how they design their studies to improve the experience of patient participants in clinical studies, that project outcomes are designed to maximize impact to daily lives of people with Parkinson's, and that future knowledge translation activities are done with the general Parkinson's community in mind. For more information on this opportunity please email calaina.brooke@parkinson.ca.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The principal consideration used to evaluate applications is research excellence potential. There are, however, a variety of additional criteria that may be considered by the Trainee Committee in the evaluation process. Each of the criteria listed below will be considered in assigning the overall ranking of the application, weighting them as indicated for each application. Note that the application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific or social impact and thus deserving of a high priority score. For example, an investigator may propose to carry out important work that by its nature is not innovative but is essential to expand knowledge and understanding of Parkinson's disease in a given field.

- **CANDIDATE – 40%**
 - Academic Record
 - Honours & Awards
 - Research Experience
 - Letters of Reference/Support
 - Publications
- **PROJECT – 40%**
 - Project Novelty (10%)
 - Project Feasibility (10%)
 - Impact of Project and Relevance to Parkinson's Disease (20%)
- **SUPERVISOR/ENVIRONMENT – 20%**
 - Supervisor's Research Track Record

- Training environment and opportunity to learn

In addition to the above criteria all applications will also be reviewed with respect to the following:

- Does the applicant show promise of significantly advancing biomedical or clinical research in the area of Parkinson's disease? Is the applicant appropriately trained and well suited to enter into this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the applicant? Is this project relevant to pursuing a greater understanding of Parkinson's for the applicant?
- Is the research work that the applicant will be involved in of high quality? Are the applicant's conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses of the proposed project/area of study adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate? Does it contribute to Canada's leadership potential in Parkinson's knowledge in that field? Where does this work position itself in relation to world knowledge of Parkinson's at this time?
- Is the project or project supervisor positioned to build significantly on the existing strengths of the individual researcher? Does the work stretch the experience and professional knowledge of the applicant?
- Is the scientific environment in which the work will be done likely to contribute to the applicant's learning? Is there evidence of institutional support of the training program?
- The adequacy of the proposed protection of humans, animals, or of the environment, to the extent that they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the application. The Trainee Committee will also examine the provisions for the protection of human subjects (if any) and the safety of the research environment.
- Where a trainee and supervisor are submitting an application to the same competition, trainees submitting their own proposal (not identical to the proposal submitted by their supervisor) will be given priority ranking.

GENERAL POLICIES

This Request for Applications made by Parkinson Canada is subject to the General Policies (the "Policies") contained in Parkinson Canada's Research Program Application Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), which the applicant shall be deemed to have accepted upon submission to Parkinson Canada of an Application to participate in the Program. Failure to comply with the Policies may result, in addition to any other remedies Parkinson Canada may have at law, in termination of the Program and exclusion of the applicant from future grant and fellowship award competitions.

A successful applicant who has received an award under the Program may not transfer the award to another institution unless exceptionally approved by the chairs of the Research Policy Committee and Trainee Committee (please see Guidelines).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants shall comply with the reporting obligations outlined in the Guidelines.

Parkinson Canada requires fellowship recipients to submit Annual and Final Progress Reports. The advance of the portion of the award to be made in the second year of the term of the Program is conditional upon submission of an **Annual Progress Report** to Parkinson Canada in substance and form satisfactory to the Trainee Committee at **the end of the first year** of the term of the Program. The report shall be submitted on SMAApply no later than the one-year anniversary date of the start of the Program. Progress report guidelines and instructions will be provided by Parkinson Canada in advance of the report deadline.

A **Final Progress Report** detailing the results of the successful applicant's progress, in substance and

form satisfactory to the Trainee Committee, shall be submitted on SMaply no later than **three months after** the termination of the two-year term of the Program.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are submitted online through the Parkinson Canada online application system called SMaply. It can be accessed through the following link which is also available on the Parkinson Canada website at <https://parkinsoncan.smaply.io/>. **The deadline to submit applications is October 5, 2026 (5:00 pm EST).** Applications received after this time will not be considered and will be disqualified from the competition. There will be no exceptions.

Applications for Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship include the following:

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri). **Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being withdrawn.**

- 1) **Personal Statement** from the applicant expressing his/her interest in the field of Parkinson's, and his/her career goals and evidence of the applicant's commitment to Parkinson's disease. This statement should include the relevance of proposed training to the applicant's future career (**2 pages max; 2.5 pages French**).
- 2) **Project Summary:** Please state in **500 words or less (600 words French)** the scientific question being asked, the methods you will use to address it, and the expected outcome. *(To save space, you do not need to include basic information such as the description of Parkinson's disease)*
- 3) **Lay Summary:** Describe your project in clear, plain language for a general audience. Avoid technical jargon. (300 words max.; 500 words Francais). Applicants should use the following subheadings to organize their statement:
 - o Background – what is the current state of research for your project?
 - o Hypothesis/Research Question – what do you hope to learn?
 - o Methodology – what tools and techniques will be used?
- 4) **Project Impact Statement:** Please describe in 500 words or less (700 Francais) the anticipated patient and clinical impact of your project using the following prompts to organize the statement. Write this section for a general audience and avoid technical jargon.
 - o Define a clear pathway to impact by outlining how the proposed research could translate into clinical application, intervention development, or changes in care for people affected by Parkinson's in both the short term (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 years).
 - ♣ Specify and describe the stage of translation your project represents and concrete next steps required to advance your work along this pathways to clinical application (e.g., early discovery with defined translational intent, preclinical validation, clinical research, implementation in care settings).
 - ♣ For projects with no immediate clinical outcomes, clearly justify project relevance by explaining how the findings would lead to or accelerate future clinical or care-based applications.
 - o Articulate expected benefits of the outcomes of this project for people affected by Parkinson's, (eg. improvements in symptom management, care delivery, access to services, quality of life etc.)
 - o Describe how people affected by Parkinson's have been or will be meaningfully engaged in shaping the research. This may include:
 - ♣ informing study design or priority setting
 - ♣ supporting feasible and inclusive recruitment and participation
 - ♣ contributing to interpretation of findings or knowledge translation

- 5) **Project Narrative: (3 pages max; 3.5 pages French)** including:
 - **Background** of proposed studies and **hypothesis** to be tested.
 - **Specific aims** of the research
 - **Methods** and experimental details.
 - The 3-page maximum applies only to the project narrative and does not include supporting documentation described below.
- 6) **Relevant Support Materials**
 - o Literature references
 - o Photographs, tables, figures
 - o Letters of collaboration
 - o Relevant published work (max 3 publications)
- 7) **Biographical information** of the applicant to be provided by completing the Parkinson Canada Biographical Sketch Form (for trainees), including a summary of:
 - **Education & Degrees**
 - **Positions & Honours** – previous positions (including current), list of honours, awards, and positions on any committees.
 - **Publications** - where the applicant has participated as a co-author, first-author, etc. (describe the contribution of the applicant for each publication). Includes scientific papers, book chapters, etc.
 - **Other Contributions** – posters, oral presentations, commercialization activities and intellectual property.
 - **Funding** – list all current, pending, and completed funding support.
 - Maximum 4 pages
- 8) **Official transcripts** of the applicant's complete academic record to date, including degrees and specialty certifications. Foreign transcripts **MUST** be accompanied by a certified English or French interpretation and a clear explanation of the grading system.
- 9) **Assessment Forms** of Candidate for a Fellowship completed by **two (2) sponsors/referees**, accompanied by **statements of support** (500 words max) from each such sponsor. Sponsors should be recent supervisors from the program in which the applicant's specialty training was taken and should include the director of the program in which the applicant's neurology or neurosurgery training was received.
- 10) **Signature of an authorized signing official** of the applicant's host institution.
- 11) **Supervisor Support Materials:**
 - a. **Supervisor's biographical information:** using the Parkinson Canada biographical sketch form (for Principal Investigators). 4 pages maximum.
 - b. **Letter of support** from the proposed supervisor (max 1 page)
 - c. **Description** of where research will be conducted and the resources available there (maximum 500 words)
- 12) **EDIJ Self-Identification Questionnaire:** All applicants are required to complete a self-identification questionnaire on SMAApply (under the EDIJ Self-Identification Questionnaire Program). The purpose of this questionnaire is for Parkinson Canada to better understand the demographics of our applicant pool and of our grant recipients. The applicant may choose the option "I prefer not to answer" for any question where they do not feel comfortable sharing personal information. The answers provided will have no bearing on any funding decisions and will only be used for internal evaluation of our funding programs. All answers from the questionnaires will be migrated into a de-identified aggregated format so that no responses can be tracked back to any one individual, and all responses will be deleted from SMAApply before Aug. 31, 2027.

Applications may be submitted in either English or French. Best efforts will be made to assign French-speaking reviewers with appropriate research expertise for any applications that are submitted in French. In accordance with CIHR guidelines and evidence that documents written in French require more space than similar documents written in English, we will grant longer page/word allowances for

applications written fully in French. French-speaking applicants may also ask to have any application guides and materials translated into French. For more information please contact research@parkinson.ca.

All applications must be submitted via our online application system (SMAApply - <https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/>). Please retain copies of all application documents in case there are any issues accessing application files. Incomplete applications or applications received later than **October 5, 2026 (5:00 pm EST) will not be considered under any circumstances. Any applications in violation of these guidelines are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the Trainee Committee.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO:

The Parkinson Canada '[Apply for Funding](#)' webpage, or contact Calaina Brooke (Research Programs Coordinator), calaina.brooke@parkinson.ca