

Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award Guidelines

These guidelines describe the requirements for the Canadian Blood Services' Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award. The terms and conditions may be altered without notice. Applicants should always refer to the latest edition of the Guidelines.

I. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION AND PRIORITIES

Canadian Blood Services manages the national supply of blood, blood products and stem cells, and related services for all the provinces and territories (excluding Quebec). Canadian Blood Services also operates an integrated, pan-Canadian service delivery model that includes leading an interprovincial system for organ donation and transplantation. Through the Centre for Innovation, Canadian Blood Services facilitates the creation, translation, and application of new knowledge to support a safe, effective, and responsive system of blood and related biologics for Canada.

The objective of the **Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award** (“Program Support Award”) is to promote national excellence in transfusion science and medicine in service of Canadian patients. The Program Support Award will provide funding to research groups that constitute centres of excellence in transfusion research in Canada to enable the development of research activities and to foster collaboration and knowledge dissemination within a centre and across the Canadian transfusion community. Priority will be given to research groups that conduct transfusion research to inform evidence-based clinical practice and that promote the uptake of research findings by the transfusion community through changes in policy or practice. The Program Support Award is not intended to provide operating funds for individual research projects; rather it is intended to fund activities and resources to promote the success of the group’s transfusion research strategy.

Launched in February 2017, the Program Support Award provides competitive funding to established research groups that constitute centres of excellence in transfusion research to address the needs of the transfusion science and medicine community. With a total investment of \$2.3M over five years, the Program will support up to two teams each receiving a maximum of \$230,000 per year for up to five years, with a requirement for renewal at year three.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- **Primary Applicant:** The Primary Applicant must have a senior leadership role (program director or equivalent) within the research group and must be affiliated with a Canadian academic program as a faculty member. The Primary Applicant is responsible for submitting the application, managing the team members to deliver the program deliverables as approved, managing the funds, and reporting on progress and financial activities.



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- **Research group composition and expertise:** The research group must be based at a Canadian university or hospital. The group must have an established research program in transfusion science and medicine with a clearly articulated transfusion research strategy. Group investigators must be affiliated with an academic program as faculty members. There is no restriction on the number of investigators. However, all identified investigators must have a defined role in the delivery of the research program, and their expertise must be clearly required to adequately address the proposed goals.
- **Collaborators and Partners:** Collaborators and partners with a defined role may complement the research group but are not eligible for funding. Their role in the research program is to provide a specific service or expertise and may be knowledge end-users.
- **Program objectives and priorities:** Program Support Award proposals must be aligned with the program objective and priorities identified in Section I. Proposals for research programs that are not relevant will not be considered for funding.
- **Budget:** The proposed budget must not exceed \$1.15M including up to \$230,000 per year for up to five (5) years.
 - Funds cannot be used for salary support for investigators (i.e., individuals who are eligible to apply for operating funds from the federal agencies).
 - Funds may be used for personnel (e.g., program manager/coordinator, biostatistician, data analyst) salaries, trainee stipends, consultant fees, and knowledge dissemination and mobilization activities (e.g., meeting and travel expenses, publication of knowledge dissemination tools).
 - Funds may not be used to substitute for major operating grants or clinical trial funding; however, funds may be used in a targeted fashion to obtain preliminary data with which to apply to other agencies for operating grant or clinical trial support.
 - The purchase of small items of equipment is permissible; however, the maximum that can be spent over the five year funding period is \$8500 (exclusive of applicable taxes).
 - No funding is to be used for institutional overhead.

III. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for the Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award is comprised of two phases: Registration and Application.

i) Registration Phase

- Complete the Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award Registration Form as per the instructions outlined in the form.
- Submit the Registration Form by email to the Centre for Innovation at centreforinnovation@blood.ca on or before the deadline, as per the Instructions in the Registration Form. **No registration forms will be accepted after the deadline.**
- Canadian Blood Services will acknowledge receipt of the Registration Form by email.



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- An administrative review of the Registration Form will be performed by Centre for Innovation staff to assess the basic eligibility criteria (Section II) have been met. The information provided in the Registration Form will be used by Centre for Innovation staff to determine the expertise required to review applications.
- Review will be performed within ten (10) business days of the Registration deadline.
- Canadian Blood Services will contact all registrants and provide the full Application Form to those who meet the basic eligibility criteria. No feedback on the proposal will be provided to the registrants.

Applicants must submit a Registration Form in order to receive the full Application Form.

ii) Application Phase

Eligible applicants who have completed the Registration Form will be invited, by email, to submit a full application. **Unsolicited applications will not be accepted.**

- Complete the Canadian Blood Services Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award Application Form and prepare the supporting documents for the Application Package, as per the Instructions in the Application Form.
- Submit the Application Package (Application Form and supporting documents) by email to the Centre for Innovation at centreforinnovation@blood.ca on or before the competition deadline, as per the Instructions in the Application Form. **No applications or additional material will be accepted after the deadline.**
- The duly received Transfusion Medicine Research Program Support Award Application Package constitutes an agreement to adhere to the conditions governing the award.
- Canadian Blood Services will acknowledge receipt of the application by email.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

All applications will be subjected to rigorous peer review by experts external to Canadian Blood Services. The evaluation of applications is as follows: (1) written evaluations are obtained from subject matter experts external to Canadian Blood Services; and (2) applications and written evaluations are discussed and evaluated at a face-to-face Grant Review Panel meeting.

i) Grant Review Panel Composition

A Grant Review Panel (“Review Panel”) composed of subject matter experts external to Canadian Blood Services will be convened. The Review Panel will comprise a Chair and 2 – 4 additional members, depending on the number and nature of applications received for the competition. Review Panel members will be selected by the Chief Medical and Scientific Officer. Canadian Blood Services will make the identity of Review Panel members available to all applicants following the announcement of funding decisions.

ii) Evaluation Criteria

Applications are reviewed to identify research programs with the greatest likelihood of success in addressing the Program Support Award objectives and priorities. The research program's strategy and vision, and the research group's accomplishments to date will be considered during the review of the proposal. Considerations for the criteria are as follows:

Research Strategy and Vision (50%):

- A creative and innovative strategy that has the potential to address identified knowledge gaps in transfusion science and medicine;
- A clearly defined plan to impact transfusion clinical practice in Canada during the five-year funding period and beyond;
- Alignment of the investigators' expertise with the proposed strategic goals;
- The extent to which the Program Support Award funding proposal will facilitate the execution of the research program's strategy and vision.

Research Program Calibre (50%):

- The excellence of the established research group (e.g., research productivity, success at obtaining research funding);
- The demonstrated impact on clinical practice of the research findings generated by the research program (e.g., changes in policy and/or practice resulting from the work of the group); and
- The extent to which appropriate partners and collaborators are identified.

Applications will be assessed on a common adjudication scale:

RANGE	DESCRIPTION
4.5 – 5.0	An outstanding proposal with minimal short-comings.
4.0 – 4.5	An excellent proposal with possible improvements.
3.5 – 3.9	A very good proposal with some improvements necessary.
3.0 – 3.5	A good proposal that should not be funded. Improvements required.
2.6 – 2.9	A fair proposal that should not be funded. Major revisions required.
0 – 2.5	A poor proposal that fails to provide convincing information and/or has serious inherent flaws or gaps.

The application's budget will also be assessed. Reviewers will be required to assess if the requested budget is appropriate to support the proposal and is well-justified.

iii) Review Process

Canadian Blood Services will obtain written reviews for each application from subject matter experts external to Canadian Blood Services and the Review Panel.

The Chair of the Review Panel will assign two Review Panel members to review each application, one as primary reviewer and the other as secondary reviewer. Assignments will be made based on the subject



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matter of the applications in relation to the expertise of the Review Panel members. Both reviewers will prepare written reviews in advance of the Review Panel meeting.

The Chair will convene and oversee the Review Panel meeting. For each application, the Chair will invite the primary and secondary reviewers to announce their preliminary scores. The Chair will then invite the primary reviewer to present the salient features of their review to the Review Panel and to justify their preliminary score. The secondary reviewer will then be invited to identify any review features that differ from that of the primary reviewer and to address any additional points made in the written reviews obtained from the external reviewers. Both reviewers will also be invited to identify any budgetary concerns.

The primary and secondary reviewers will arrive at a consensus score and answer any questions from other Review Panel members. Once a consensus score is reached, all Review Panel members will score the application within ± 0.5 of the consensus score by secret ballot.

The mean scores of all Review Panel members will be used to rank the applications. Applications with a mean score below 3.5 will not be considered for funding. If there are any ties in the mean score of the applications in the fundable range, ties will be broken by consensus. The Chair will then return to the issue of budgetary concerns, to secure agreement on any financial reductions to proposals in the fundable range.

The Chair will moderate all Review Panel discussions, ensure a fair and timely process, and be responsible for communicating the final rankings and comments of the Review Panel to Canadian Blood Services. In addition, the Chair will summarize the recommended budgets for each application. The Chair shall communicate any issues of concern raised by the Review Panel in the same manner.

The Chair's recommendations will be used to make funding decisions by Canadian Blood Services. Decisions will be communicated in writing to all applicants in a timely manner following the Review Panel meeting. Applicants will be provided with all reviewers' written evaluations (anonymized).

V. General Terms and Conditions of the Award

Institution Responsibility

The Primary Applicant's institution must agree to administer the award in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award as per the guidelines. See Section VI for details on financial administration of the award.

Start Date

The Program Support Award should begin within three (3) months of August 1 2017.

Use of Funds

Program Support Award funding may be used according to the budget guidelines provided in Section II.



Conditions of Funding

The duration of the Program Support Award funding is five (5) years, with a requirement for successful renewal at three (3) years.

The Primary Applicant must immediately notify the Centre for Innovation of their inability, for any reason, to carry out or complete the work for which an award was received. Should the Primary Applicant terminate their relationship with their institution or the research program, a formal written request must be made to the Centre for Innovation for a different investigator to take on the role for the balance of the award.

Should Canadian Blood Services funding levels not be available or be decreased due to unforeseen circumstances, Canadian Blood Services reserves the right to reduce, defer or cancel funding of awards received through this funding opportunity.

Progress Reporting

Progress reports are due semi-annually for the duration of the Program Support Award. A final report is due within one (1) month of the Program Support Award end date. It is the responsibility of the Primary Applicant to meet all reporting requirements. Awardees will be provided with templates for these reports.

Publications

Awardees are encouraged to publish the results of work carried out during the tenure of their Award. Details on how to acknowledge Canadian Blood Services in publications and presentations will be provided to awardees.

VI. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF AWARD FUNDS

Canadian Blood Services' Centre for Innovation will instruct Canadian Blood Services' Finance Services to transfer the approved funds to the Primary Applicant's institution. The Primary Applicant and its institution are responsible for administering the funds according to the guidelines set-out in this document. The Primary Applicant and its institution are responsible for financial reporting on expenditures using Form 300 or equivalent to Canadian Blood Services.

Primary Applicants are expected to exercise appropriate stewardship over the financial resources entrusted to them from the Program Support Award. In no circumstances shall the total disbursement exceed the funds available for each award.

Requests to extend resources remaining in a Program Support Award account beyond the funding period must be made to the Centre for Innovation.

VII. CONTACT AND ENQUIRIES

Enquiries should be addressed to the Centre for Innovation, centreforinnovation@blood.ca or (613) 739-6480.