



RBC - Brain Canada Research Partnership in Mental Health Services for Children and Youth Multi-Investigator Research Initiative (MIRI) Request for Applications (RFA)

About RBC’S Commitment to Community and Sustainability:

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RBC supports a broad range of community initiatives through donations, sponsorships and employee volunteer activities. In 2014, we contributed more than \$111 million to causes worldwide, including donations and community investments of more than \$76 million and \$35 million in sponsorships.

About Brain Canada

Brain Canada is a national non-profit organization that enables and supports excellent, innovative, paradigm-changing brain research in Canada. For more than one decade, Brain Canada has made the case for the brain as a single, complex system with commonalities across the range of neurological disorders, mental illnesses and addictions, brain and spinal cord injuries. Looking at the brain as one system has underscored the need for increased collaboration across disciplines and institutions, and a smarter way to invest in brain research that is focused on outcomes that will benefit patients and families.

The Canada Brain Research Fund is a public-private partnership designed to encourage Canadians to increase their support of brain research, and maximize the impact and efficiency of those investments. Brain Canada has committed to raising \$100 million from private and non-governmental sources, which will be matched by government on a 1:1 basis. The Fund was announced in federal budget 2011, which proposed to “allocate up to \$100 million to establish the Canada Brain Research Fund, which will support the very best Canadian neuroscience, fostering collaborative research and accelerating the pace of discovery, in order to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians who suffer from brain disorders.”

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Rationale

Supported by the Canada Brain Research Fund, the purpose of MIRI grants is to accelerate novel and transformative research that will fundamentally change our understanding of nervous system function and dysfunction and their impact on health. The ultimate goal is to reduce the social and economic burden of neurological and mental health problems by prevention, intervention, early diagnosis and treatment.

Grant Details

The RBC – Brain Canada Research Partnership will support a multi-investigator three-year research project focused on improved delivery of mental health services through the identification and validation of innovative interventions and practices that are cost-effective, and delivered at the right place and time to support both affected individuals and their families. Notably, the funded project will involve a continuing collaboration between researchers, policy-makers, service providers, and those affected by child and youth mental health issues. The collaboration will jointly identify the research questions to be studied, be engaged in the research project itself, and cooperate in the dissemination of the projects' findings to influence policy and practice.

A total of \$910,000 will be awarded to one team over two years of funding, however since unexpended Brain Canada grants can be carried over to the next fiscal year, the total project duration may be up to three years, enabling a more in-depth analysis and evaluation of any interventions.

Use of Funds

MIRI grants may be used to support any aspect of the operating costs of the research project, including: supplies and materials; provision of special services and user fees; maintenance of essential equipment; travel of team members and trainees for collaboration and presentation of results; publication costs; salaries for technical personnel; stipends of trainees; and equipment that is currently unavailable but essential for the project. MIRI grants may not be used for salary payments to any team members who are eligible to apply for operating grants from the federal granting agencies. Brain Canada does not provide institutional overhead. MIRI grants are non-renewable.

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to teams of two or more investigators in any scientific discipline who are eligible to apply for research grants from the Canadian federal granting agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC).

- One of the team members will be designated Team Leader, and will be the individual responsible for communication with Brain Canada and accountable for the team's research activities and use of funds.
- Teams must be multidisciplinary, and their members may be based in one or several research institutions. The team must include the range of expertise and experience required to carry out the proposed research.
- To build capacity and generate novel perspectives, Brain Canada encourages the formation of teams that include researchers at all stages of their careers, as well as researchers from outside the neurosciences who now wish to extend their expertise to problems of the brain and nervous system.
- Collaborators from government, the private sector, and other nations are also welcomed in order to strengthen teams and facilitate the uptake of their research results, but Brain Canada funds will only support the portion of the work conducted in Canadian institutions eligible to receive funding from the federal granting agencies.

Criteria for Assessment

To be recommended for funding, proposals will demonstrate:

- *Innovation and originality.* Proposals which, while solidly-based in scientific fact and technically feasible, offer new concepts and approaches with the potential to change the paradigms of mental health field, open the field to new experimental, preventive, intervention or treatment directions, or address a critical barrier to progress in understanding or application. Since a track record of innovative research, appropriate for career stage, is a predictor of future performance, quality of the team and novelty of the proposal will both be critical components of the assessment.
- *Multidisciplinarity and teamwork.* Members from different disciplines contribute a specific value to the team, the team contains the necessary expertise, and the experience and success of the applicants in practice and policy-relevant research, and its translation into system changes.
- *Potential for Impact.* The proposed research has the potential to reduce the social and/or economic burden of mental health problems through improved prevention, intervention, diagnosis, and treatment. This includes research that fundamentally changes our understanding of brain and nervous system function or dysfunction, and which will have long-term practical impacts, as well as research with shorter-term impacts, including changes to professional practice, access to mental health care and system of care, delivery of services, products, and public policy.

Review Process

Letter of Intent

In anticipation of a large number of applications, and not wishing to waste the time of those involved in uncompetitive proposals, there will be a short LOI stage to identify those applications that are most likely to be competitive.

LOIs will be reviewed by two members of a LOI Selection Committee composed of Canadian and International members, who are not applicants. The Committee will be recruited by Brain Canada, which welcomes suggestions from Sponsors about its membership. At the discretion of the Chair of the Committee, certain LOIs may also be sent to other expert reviewers to obtain an additional opinion. Depending on the type and number of applications received, Brain Canada may recruit subcommittees of the LOI Selection Committee with specialized expertise in particular areas or approaches to research, so that LOIs are appropriately reviewed against the prevailing and relevant standards of excellence in their field.

The LOI Selection Committee will recommend which applicants should be invited to submit their LOI proposals as full applications. It may also recommend that applicants consider collaborating and consolidating their proposals.

All LOI applicants will receive anonymized reviewers' comments, but if considered uncompetitive by all reviewers, certain LOIs will not be discussed in detail at the meeting of the LOI Selection Committee and will not receive notes of the Committee discussion. Brain Canada will not entertain appeals against the assessment of the LOI Selection Committee.

Full Application

Only those invited by Brain Canada following the LOI review will be able to submit full applications. These will be reviewed by at least two expert reviewers, and by two members of a full application Selection Committee composed of Canadian and International members with broad experience and expertise in the brain sciences, who are not applicants, to ensure that all funded proposals are assessed against similar standards of excellence.

The Selection Committee will provide a merit score for each full application, and recommend to Brain Canada those applications that have received a sufficiently high merit score to deserve funding.

Applicants will receive anonymized written comments from the expert reviewers and the Selection Committee, but if considered uncompetitive by all reviewers, certain applications will not be discussed in detail at the meeting of the Selection Committee and will not receive notes of the Committee discussion. Brain Canada will not entertain appeals against the assessment of the Selection Committee.

The membership of all committees involved in the adjudication of this funding opportunity will be posted on the Brain Canada website after the results are published.

Timeline

Call for Applications:	February 27, 2015
Deadline for Receipt of Letters of Intent	16.00 EST, April 3, 2015
Invitations to submit full application issued	Week of May 18, 2015
Deadline for Receipt of Applications	16.00 EST, June 26, 2015
Notification of Award:	Early September 2015
Funding begins (earliest date):	October 1, 2015

Application Procedure

Team leaders should contact Brain Canada (programs@braincanada.ca) with enquiries about the application process.

All LOIs must be submitted using Brain Canada's electronic grant management system (https://braincanada.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp). The Team Leader must sign on to the Brain Canada electronic grant application submission portal before **16.00 EST April 3, 2015** to complete all application fields.

LOI Application Components:**1. Project summary:**

- Project title
- Project start and end dates (note: choose dates within a 36 month window)
- Keywords (including freeform): up to 10 words
- A summary of the research project and its goals, emphasizing its innovative and original features. It is also important to explain how the project is feasible within the time and funding available from the requested MIRI grant (maximum 1000 words).
- A description of the anticipated impacts of the project outcomes on reducing the social and/or economic burden of brain and mental health problems through advancing fundamental knowledge and/or improved prevention, intervention, diagnosis, and treatment (maximum 500 words).
- An explanation of how the intended project furthers the research capacity-building, knowledge translation, or other objectives of the RBC Foundation (maximum 500 words).

2. Project Team details:

- If not registered already, please have your co-applicants register with the Brain Canada grant management system (https://braincanada.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp). Registered

applicants will receive a Brain Canada PIN found under their “Personal Profile” and have access to co-write the application with the Team Leader.

- Add up to ten co-applicants using their Brain Canada PIN and last name.
- If there are more than ten co-applicants, select those most essential to the project.
- Team member publications: For each of the up to ten team members, cite up to five of their publications, of which at least three must have been published in 2010 or later. “Publications” means any type of document or medium, print or electronic, which best illustrates the member’s relevant research experience, expertise and achievement. Ideally, these describe paradigm-shifting ideas and findings, or examples of effective application and knowledge translation of research findings, and demonstrate the applicant’s ability to contribute to the proposed research project. Each item should be annotated with a brief reason for its selection. Include the DOI, URL or PMID of publications where applicable so that reviewers can access them.
- Explain the role of any trainees in the project and the unique learning opportunities they will experience.
- Explain the role that each applicant will play, and conclude with an overview of how the entire team will work together. For those ineligible to receive Brain Canada funding, explain how their contribution to the project will be funded (maximum 300 words).
- Please note that CVs are not required.

3. Budget:

- For each grant year, provide the total amount of requested grant funding in the budget table.
- Provide a brief justification for the budget for the full period of funding, listing the major line items as described under “Use of Funds”, above, supplemented by a brief statement explaining how this expenditure will support the intended operation of the grant (Maximum 600 words)

3. Attachments:

- Figures and references (maximum 1 page).

4. Optional information:

- Provide the names and contact information for up to three individuals who are not in conflict and would be competent to review the LOI and the subsequent full application, if invited.
- Provide the names and contact information for up to three individuals who should not be contacted for review

5. Signatures and Certification:

The Team Leader must click the “I Agree” box to certify the following agreement: “I certify that all members of the team have agreed to their inclusion in this LOI, and allow me to represent them throughout the application process. I also certify that all team members permit Brain Canada to

circulate this LOI and subsequent full application to third parties, under a confidentiality agreement, for the purpose of securing additional funding.” Please note that institutional and team signatures are **not** required for the LOI application.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicants to ensure their LOI submission is acceptable and received before the deadline. Those received in any other format, exceeding the page limits, incomplete, or late, will be rejected. Brain Canada will acknowledge receipt of LOIs by email within two working days. Brain Canada does **not** require at the LOI stage: signatures denoting institutional support; regulatory or ethical approval; copies of publications; evidence of preliminary results; methodological appendices; etc. Extraneous material will be deleted before the LOI is sent to the reviewers.

Full Application Procedure

Full applications are due on or before 16:00 EST on June 26, 2015

Applications must be submitted using Brain Canada’s electronic grant management system (https://braincanada.smartsimple.ca/s_Login.jsp). The system will be made available to invited research teams following a successful LOI decision notification.

The details for submitting a full application will be provided to the Team Leaders of the successful LOIs following the LOI review process. A full application will require a more detailed and well-developed rationale, research plan, and explanation of anticipated impacts.

Ownership, Confidentiality, and Intellectual Property

Brain Canada on behalf of the Partners owns all materials submitted by applicants for both LOI and full application stages. It will take reasonable steps to keep these materials confidential, and divulge them only to reviewers, committee observers, and representatives of the RBC Foundation, and other potential funders who have signed confidentiality agreements. Funded applications will be retained for comparison of intended and actual outcomes, as part of the final evaluation of the Initiative and the Canada Brain Research Fund.

The Partners do not claim ownership of intellectual property arising from research that they fund but encourage teams to disclose and protect intellectual property according to the policies of their institutions in order that it may be fully and rapidly exploited.

Reporting, Communications, and Evaluation

As a condition of continued annual funding, the Partners require a brief yearly progress report from the team/user group leader, outlining achievements and impacts realized, as well as difficulties encountered and steps taken to overcome them. Progress reports will be reviewed by members of the Selection Committees, with continued funding based upon a satisfactory review. If the Partners consider that a progress report is questionable, after discussion with the leader, they may provide an extension to the period over which the funds are available, or cancel further funding. Details of the reporting process will be provided to leaders. Annual financial reports will also be required from the institutions employing the researchers, which hold the Partners funds in trust.

Team members will contact Brain Canada, for the Partners, in advance of the publication, release or public presentation of research results obtained with Partner funding, so that a joint press release or other publicity can be prepared. Embargoes will be strictly respected. Acknowledgment of The RBC – Brain Canada Research Partnership in Mental Health Services for Children and Youth, will accompany all publication, release or presentation of such research results.

Ten percent of the final year's funding will be withheld and released on receipt of a satisfactory end-of-project report that describes the current and estimated future outputs and impacts of the resulting from Partner funding.

For further Information

For any other information or questions:

- About the MIRI competition and application process, please contact programs@braincanada.ca
- About Brain Canada and the Canada Brain Research Fund: go to <http://braincanada.ca/>
- About RBC Foundation and its commitment to children's mental health: go to <http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/commitment-to-kids/index.html>