

# **ALS Canada-Brain Canada Discovery Grants**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **I) OVERVIEW**

The Discovery Grants program has been established to encourage new basic research focused on identifying causes of, or treatments for ALS. The spirit of this program is “high risk/high reward” and is aimed at independent investigator(s) proposing a **novel** research approach, supported by a sound rationale and feasible experimental plan, but not necessarily preliminary data. Traditionally, the Discovery Grants program has provided support to **novel** projects from established ALS researchers, individuals from outside the field applying specific knowledge or expertise to ALS and related neurological disorders or teams of multiple investigators combining expertise in **novel** ways.

### **II) FUNDING**

Up to eight awards of up to \$100,000 will be awarded in this cycle. The one time award may be used for research over a 12-24 month period, at the discretion of the Principal Investigator (PI).

### **III) ELIGIBILITY**

Each co-investigator must be an independent researcher who has a PhD or equivalent, or a health professional degree (MD) with relevant postdoctoral research training. Clinical researchers should have completed residency training which includes research experience. The PI must hold an academic position at a qualifying Canadian institution, defined according to CIHR guidelines (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/36374.html>).

In applications involving multiple institutions and or/co-investigators, a lead Investigator must be named who will assume the administrative and financial responsibility for the grant, which will be paid to that individual's institution (the Institution Paid).

### **IV) APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications should be submitted via email to Dr. David Taylor, Director of Research, ALS Canada ([dt@als.ca](mailto:dt@als.ca)), as a single PDF file by 10 am EST on June 1, 2015.

Documents should be prepared using standard type fonts (Arial-11 or Times Roman -12).

Pages should be numbered and have minimum margins of 0.5” on all sides. All pages to be submitted should be included in one pdf file.

Applications that do not meet the formatting guidelines will be returned to the investigator for a single resubmission before the deadline or within 24 hours if submitted at the deadline.

Please submit your applications for review in the following order:

- 1) Cover page
- 2) Abstract (scientific)
- 3) Abstract (lay)
- 4) Research Plan
- 5) Figures and Tables
- 6) Bibliography
- 7) Budget Page
- 8) Curriculum Vitae (see below for format)
- 9) Supporting Documents
- 10) Other funding currently held or applied for

A. Cover page: Please note, this is available as a fillable form page (Word Doc).

Name of Principal Investigator (PI):

Degrees and other academic credentials (PhD, MD, etc):

Institution, Department etc.:

PI Contact Information:

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email address:

Co-investigators:

Names, Institutional Affiliation(s) and Signatures of co-investigators (including key senior personnel)

Title of the Research Proposal:

Use of Human Subjects: The PI should indicate whether or not human subjects or human materials will be used in carrying out the proposed research.

Use of Research Animals: The PI should indicate whether or not research animals will be used in carrying out the proposed research.

Use of Hazardous Materials: The PI should indicate whether toxic, radioactive, or biohazardous materials, or controlled substances, will be used in carrying out the proposed research.

Institutional Research Grants Officer to whom payments will be sent:

Name

Mailing address

Telephone

Fax

Email address

Mandatory signature lines are provided on the face page for the signature and signing date of the PI, co-investigators, and appropriate institutional administrative representatives. (signatures on signed scans are sufficient).

#### B. Abstract page

The applicant should provide:

- 1) A scientific abstract of approximately one-half page in length describing the hypothesis, rationale, specific aims and significance with respect to identifying causes and/or treatments for ALS.
- 2) A lay abstract of one paragraph describing the research in terms understandable by the public and suitable for publication on the ALS Society of Canada's web site and other publications.

Budget page(s): Budget should clearly itemize proposed use of project funds under appropriate categories and consistent with CIHR approved expenditures: personnel, laboratory equipment, consumable supplies, laboratory animals, other (including service contracts, service charges, publication costs, etc). Total budget requested should be clearly stated. The ALS – Brain Canada Discovery Grants will cover direct costs only; with total budget ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 to be spent over 12-24 months (see also Section VI). A detailed budget justification should follow the itemized budget.

Curriculum vita(e): The curriculum vitae of the PI, as well as of any co-investigators or other specified key personnel must be provided. Please do not submit the CIHR Common CV. CVs should take the form of an NIH-style abbreviated biosketch, including the following sections: Education and Training, Positions and Honours, Research Focus (one paragraph), Professional

Activities and Awards, Peer-reviewed Publications relevant to the proposal, and Research Funding (last five years). Maximum four pages.

Letters of collaboration or support letters from colleagues who will provide resources critical to carrying out the proposed research plan are also requested.

### C. Research plan

The research plan should be a maximum of SIX pages, adhering to the format described above in section IV. The research plan should be organized under the following headings:

- Rationale and statement of the hypothesis/objective of the proposed research
- Significance of the proposed project to the identification of causes or development of treatments for ALS. In the context of the ALS-BrainCanada Discovery Grants Program, describe what is novel and exciting about the research plan.
- Background: A comprehensive literature review is not expected. Please supply only the information that is required for reviewers who are specialists in ALS and neurodegenerative disease to understand the proposal.
- Preliminary results supporting the hypothesis/research objective. Note: this information can be provided in Rationale or Experimental Plan, or here as a separate section.
- Experimental Plan: due to constraints of space, put emphasis on description and justification of the general methodology to be used to test the hypothesis or achieve the research objectives.

### D. Figures and Tables

A maximum of three additional pages will be allowed for figures and/or tables which accompany the research plan (including preliminary data or information to support feasibility). These pages may not be used for supplementary text.

### E. Bibliography

The research plan should be appropriately referenced. Please use a format that includes the title of the reference. The Bibliography is not included in the total page count.

## **V) EVALUATION**

Applications will be reviewed and rated by the International Peer Review Panel comprising basic and clinician scientists with expertise in ALS and/or related neurodegenerative diseases. Panel members and future Chairs are selected by the current Panel Chair, the Director of Research, the chair of the Scientific and Medical Advisory Council of ALS Canada, and a Brain Canada representative and approved by the boards of ALS Canada and Brain Canada. Grants will be assessed on novelty of the idea or approach, scientific merit, potential impact and

feasibility of addressing the hypothesis. The Director of Research and a Brain Canada representative will participate in the discussion during the review, but will not provide specific ratings for applications.

Additional ad hoc distance reviewers may be solicited by the Chair, Director of Research and Brain Canada according to additional expertise required or work load of the Panel members. These extra reviewers will provide ratings and detailed comments to inform the discussions at the in person meeting of the Panel. Primary reviewers will always be Panel members.

The International Peer Review Panel will provide its scores and rankings to the Director of Research and representative of Brain Canada, who will propose a mutually decided funding scenario to their respective Boards of Directors. Applicants will be informed of the decision on September 21, 2015 and funding will start on October 1, 2015. Should there be more meritorious applications than available funds, applications will be funded in descending order of merit.

All applicants will receive anonymized reviewers' comments and a summary of major discussion points from the Director of Research, but applications considered uncompetitive by all reviewers may not be discussed in detail at the meeting of the Peer Review Panel.

## **VI) CONDITIONS OF THE AWARD**

1) Release of funds will be subject to receipt of relevant ethics approvals from the lead PI's institutional review committees, where necessary (for use of human subjects, research animals, or hazardous materials). Carryover of unspent funds is permissible. No-cost extensions are possible, pending approval by the boards of ALS Canada and Brain Canada. Significant changes in research aims or budget allocation requires *a priori* permission of ALS Canada and Brain Canada.

2) Funds will be sent as quarterly instalments of up to \$25,000, to the PI's institution (Institution paid). The last instalment will be released upon receipt of the final progress report.

3) An annual statement of expenditures is required from the PI's institution and must be submitted within eight weeks of each year-end to ALS Canada.

4) Progress Reports: Year-end progress reports must be submitted within four weeks to ALS Canada. The final progress report is due within four weeks of termination of the grant. A template for reports will be provided by ALS Canada upon acceptance of the award.

5) Funding is contingent upon compliance with the policies of the ALS Society of Canada and Brain Canada.

6) Budgetary overlap for the project with other funding provided by ALS Canada, Brain Canada or another agency must be disclosed.

7) The intent of this grant is to fund research that will be in the open domain. All manuscripts, presentations, abstracts, etc. must acknowledge funding by ALS Canada and Brain Canada. Grantees should make every effort to publish all findings related to the project and to acknowledge ALS Canada and Brain Canada in media events discussing research funded by ALS Canada and Brain Canada. Manuscripts or other presentations in press must be sent to the Director of Research of ALS Canada upon acceptance for publication. ALS Canada should also be notified as soon as possible of media events related to the project.

8) Grantees are required to inform the Director of Research of significant difficulties, availability of resources, additional funding sources, or changes to the experimental plan throughout the term of the grant.

9) To encourage collaboration and increase visibility of ALS researchers, ALS Canada is establishing an official national research network. Participation and registration in this network is required in order to receive funding from ALS Canada.

## **VII) QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

- Call announced February 9, 2015
- Application deadline June 1, 2015
- Announcement of award September 21, 2015
- Earliest funding start date October 1, 2015