Discovery Fund
2024 Talent Development Competition: Postdoctoral Research Award

Background
The Discovery Fund is dedicated to finding innovative solutions to major challenges in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness and improving outcomes for those affected, now and in the future. The Discovery Fund Talent Development Competition, supporting prospective postdoctoral researchers, reflects an investment in the future generation of world class researchers in mental health.

Award Guidelines
The Discovery Fund is hosting a Talent Development Competition to provide support for postdoctoral researchers pursuing basic and clinical research to better identify, diagnose, prevent and treat mental illnesses. Postdoctoral researchers are expected to make independent contributions to knowledge during their appointment. These may be in the form of a contribution to an existing project, or through the development of an original project. Projects will be assessed and awarded under the research themes below, listed alphabetically. These research themes have equal weight of importance and no theme is favoured over another.

1. Basic and pre-clinical neuroscience
2. Brain and/or behavior interventions (including technology-based interventions)
3. Clinical measure and/or biomarker identification
4. Community-based research
5. Health policy or health services research
6. Implementation science
7. Social and epidemiological research
8. Translation of clinical neuroscience (i.e. the study of mechanisms of disease and new ways of diagnosis and treatment) into clinical treatment

The Discovery Fund strategic priorities are listed below. All applications (including basic and clinical research projects) must identify the relationship to at least one of these three priority areas:

1. **Suicide Rate Reduction**
   a. Community/public health-based interventions
   b. Hospital-based interventions
   c. Endophenotypes of suicidal behaviour

2. **Reducing Disability Associated with Mental Disorders**
   a. Addressing cognitive dysfunction associated with mental disorders across the lifespan
   b. Decreasing disability associated with depression and other common disorders

3. **Improving Psychosis Prevention and Outcomes**
   a. Primary prevention/early intervention
   b. Improving functional outcomes associated with chronic psychotic illness

One-Year Postdoctoral Research Award
One-year awards of $60,000 CAD stipend + $5,000 CAD research allowance are available (conditional on availability of funds). Applications will be evaluated by a team of independent researchers, based on CIHR standards of excellence. The final selection of awards will be made by the Discovery Fund Steering Committee.

Two-Year Postdoctoral Research Award
The intention of this Research Award is to provide opportunity for postdoctoral researchers to generate new

international and national collaborations by holding a Research Award that requires two co-supervisors from different institutions. **Two-year awards of $60,000 CAD stipend + $5,000 CAD research allowance each are available** (conditional on availability of funds). During the first year of this stipend, awardees will be located at an institution external to CAMH (University of Toronto is acceptable, but another institution would be preferable) and during the second year, the awardee will be located at CAMH. Selection of awards will follow the same process as for the one-year Research Award outlined above.

Eligibility Criteria

- This award is intended to support candidates who are seeking **full-time** postdoctoral studies under the primary supervision of a CAMH Scientist.
- Applicants must obtain sponsorship of a primary supervisor who holds a scientific appointment at CAMH as Associate Scientist, Staff Scientist, Senior Staff Scientist, Scientist, or Senior Scientist. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to potential CAMH supervisors. Information regarding CAMH scientists can be found at the CAMH staff directory. Please contact internal.funding@camh.ca to clarify eligibility if your potential supervisor's scientific appointment type is not listed here.
- Postdoctoral Researchers are only eligible to apply to one CAMH Postdoctoral Research Award per funding cycle.
- Only one applicant per primary supervisor will be permitted to apply for the Discovery Fund Postdoctoral Research Award (DF Postdoctoral Research Award).
- Current DF Postdoctoral Research Awardees are not eligible to apply. Postdoctoral Researchers may receive a maximum of two DF Postdoctoral Research Awards; however, these awards cannot be held in two consecutive years (new awardees must wait one year to re-apply following receipt of the award) and each application will be considered independently.
- Applicants cannot hold multiple internal CAMH Research Award awards at the same time (including but not limited to Discovery Fund, *womenmind*, Azrieli, etc.).
- Applicants must have a PhD and/or regulated health professional degree at the time they start the award. For examples of health professions, please consult CIHR's list of Eligible Health Professions. Any interruptions, delays or post- degree clinical training in post-PhD/ regulated health professional degree cumulative experience may be taken into account in determining eligibility if detailed information on the interruption, including specific dates, is provided. Postdoctoral researchers that completed their doctoral program more than 5 years ago must first consult with internal.funding@camh.ca regarding eligibility before applying. Proof of degree fulfillment will be required for those applicants that are successful.
- CAMH Employees are ineligible to receive remuneration from a training award and their employment role concurrently. Interested applicants who are currently employed by CAMH under a position other than a trainee must contact ResearchHR@camh.ca and internal.funding@camh.ca in advance of the deadline to confirm eligibility.
- Applicant's supervisor(s) must agree to provide the applicant with a minimum of 75% protected time for research.
- Applicants with external funding support that overlaps the period of the DF Postdoctoral Research Awards are not eligible to apply (i.e., external funding that continues past December 31, 2024).
- Applicants must apply to at least one external agency for stipend support in the time period between April 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023. If there are particular circumstances that prevent this, please first consult with internal.funding@camh.ca. You will be asked to provide proof should you be successful in receiving a 2024 Discovery Fund Postdoctoral Research Award.
- The Discovery Fund welcomes applications from First Nations, Métis and Inuit, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, women, people with disabilities (including people who have experienced mental health and substance use challenges), and those not listed who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

Conditions of Award:
- If the applicant is successful in obtaining a Research Award offer from an external agency, the applicant will accept the external offer and free up the DF Postdoctoral Research Awards for other possible applicants. In situations where the value of the external award is less than the DF Postdoctoral Research Awards, a top-up may be provided by the Discovery Fund. The amount of the top-up will depend on funding availability. **Under no circumstances will Research Award funds be used to cover gaps in funding between the time when existing funding ends and the external funding begins.**
- All DF Postdoctoral Research Awards are to commence during the period of July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.
- For the one-year Research Award, successful applicants are expected to be located at CAMH during the one-year period of the award.

Instructions

1. Notice of Intent

Applicants must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) online using the following form: https://form.jotform.com/232115091393248 **by October 27, 2023** b**y 5:00pm (EST).** The NOI must identify the supervisor(s), include a brief description of the proposed project (250 words), identify Discovery Fund research themes and strategic priority areas, answer self-identification* and project representation questions, and provide 3-5 project area and methodology keywords. Information from the NOI will assist the Grants & Awards team with matching applications to academic experts in the review process. Late NOIs will not be accepted.

*Information collected will be confidential, cannot be accessed by reviewers, and will not be linked to personnel data. Data regarding the applicant pool will be reported only to the Discovery Fund selection committee and a small number of ROSS staff members for the purposes of program administration, process improvement, and reporting requirements.

2. Research Assurances and Approvals Form (RAAF)

A RAAF must be submitted via the eRA Portal by **December 1, 2023 by 5:00pm (EST)**. For guidance on RAAF submission, please see the Research Portal. If you are applying as an external applicant, please reach out to internal.funding@camh.ca for instructions on how to create an account for the eRA Portal.

3. Full Application

Applicants must submit their application online (link to be provided following NOI submission and confirmation of eligibility) using the guidelines below. The full application must be submitted by **December 8, 2023 by 5:00pm (EST).** Late applications will not be accepted.

a) **Project Information:**
- **Project Title – Limit of 640 characters, including spaces.**
- **Lay Title – Limit of 200 characters, including spaces.** Provide a title for the project that is in a language clear to the general public.
- **Lay Abstract – Limit of 2,000 characters, including spaces.** Describe the project in a way that is accessible to a lay audience.

b) **Training Plan – Limit of 7,000 characters, including spaces.**
- Provide an overview of how your previous research training and/or experience outside of academia relates to the present proposal (i.e., how your previous experience will benefit your current/upcoming research

training work) and elaborate on your career goals.
- Describe how the training you expect to acquire will contribute to your productivity and research goals.
- If relevant, describe how additional postdoctoral/post-health professional training experience, including the development of research, technical, and professional skills and networks, will contribute toward your career goals.
- Indicate why you decided upon your proposed training location (i.e., CAMH, supervisor, etc.) and what you expect to learn from the training experience.
- Provide justification if you are planning to hold this award in the same research environment (i.e., research institution or its affiliate, supervisor or co-supervisor) where you completed your previous degree.

c) **Research Project Summary – Limit of 4,000 characters, including spaces, references included.** The research project summary should be written in general scientific language, which is an important skill to acquire for future success in the research environment as applications can be reviewed by multi-disciplinary committees. This section should include the specific hypothesis of the research and describe your role on the proposed project. Make sure that it provides a concise account of the subject matter; an overview of each part of the research plan, specific project aims and the methodology. The summary should reflect the significance of your project and should clearly state an explanation of the relevance of your project to the goals of the Discovery Fund. Please use the following headings:
- **Background –** summarize the stage of knowledge relevant to the proposal.
- **Hypotheses/research questions** – state these clearly and concisely.
- **Methods –** give essential details of methods; describe the data to be collected and the method of data analysis proposed. Clearly define the population.
- **Impact –** state how the project will advance knowledge if completed as planned.
- **Relevance to the goals of the Discovery Fund –** demonstrate your proposed project's alignment with the research themes and strategic priorities of the Discovery Fund.
- **Role on proposed project** – address how the proposed research will support your training goals.
- **Timetable –** include a timetable for the work in your description

d) **Research Training Environment – Limit of 1,750 characters, including spaces.**

Describe the space, facilities and personnel support that will be available to you. This section should be written with the input of the proposed supervisor and should demonstrate the commitment of the proposed supervisor(s) to support the development of the applicant's research project (funding, facilities, equipment, etc.) and professional development. It should also demonstrate a commitment to developing your research, technical and professional skills and networks over the training period by providing career planning, skills development and networking opportunities to prepare for an impactful career.

e) **Most significant contributions (if applicable) – Limit 3,000 characters, including spaces.**
Please highlight any relevant publications, activities, awards and recognitions or knowledge translation that are not covered by the CCV.

f) **Interruptions and Delays (if applicable) – Limit of 1,500 characters, including spaces.**
Applicants may explain any gaps in the chronology of their experience. Applicants can list any considerations that have had an effect on their performance or productivity, including considerations that may have resulted in delays in disseminating their research results, such as health problems, family responsibilities, disabilities, trauma and/or loss, pandemic impact or other circumstances, for example, the time necessary to complete a monograph, file a patent, or commercialize an industrial process or product; and for health professionals, engagement in post-degree non-research related clinical training (residency, etc.). Applicants should list the interruption/delay and

provide specific dates, but are not expected to disclose confidential details. If there are none, leave this section blank.

4. Curriculum Vitae (CV) – uploaded as Postdoctoral Research Award attachments.
   a) Applicant CV
   Provide a CIHR Biosketch CV (completed via the Canadian Common CV interface) or NIH Biosketch.

   b) Supervisor CV
   - Supervisor CVs should also be in the Canadian Common CV format using the CIHR Academic or Biosketch templates.
   - Other CV templates will also be accepted, with a limit of 6 pages.

5. Letters of Reference – max 1 page each, using 12-point font. Two referees must provide an assessment of the applicant. These assessments should come from people under whom you have trained and/or who have had a good opportunity to assess your potential for research. Applicants should refer their selected sponsors to CIHR's Information for Sponsors web page for useful tips.

   - Two letters of reference must be submitted by 5 p.m. on the application due date.
   - Reference letters from the candidate's Supervisor or Co-Supervisor will **not** be accepted.
   - Letters must be submitted by email from the referee's email to internal.funding@camh.ca. The Reference Letter must be on institutional letterhead and signed by the referee.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that letters of reference are sent by the submission deadline.

6. Submitting the Application

The application must be submitted online (link to be provided following NOI submission) **by December 8, 2023.** If you have any questions regarding the application guidelines or submission process, please contact Elizabeth Mueller via **internal.funding@camh.ca.**

Note: Supplemental material and material exceeding the specified length will not be considered in the review process. The reviewing committee consists of academic experts but not necessarily specialists in the applicant's specific subject area.

DEADLINES AT A GLANCE
Notice of Intent: October 27, 2023
RAAF: December 1, 2023
Full Application: December 8, 2023
Notice of Award: April 2024