

Labatt Family Innovation Fund in Brain Health Request for Applications 2023

Background

In Canada alone, one in five people will experience mental illness in their lifetime. However, by seeding the field of psychiatry research with talented scientists we can bring substantive advance to the broad spectrum of mental health in general and the fields of eating disorders, depression and anxiety in particular.

Through the *Labatt Family Innovation Fund in Brain Health*, the University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry will fund promising studies to impact the trajectory and outcomes of eating disorders, depression, or anxiety in young and mid-life adults.

Timeline for 2023 Competition

Competition Announcement – June 1, 2023

Letter of Interest Deadline – July 14, 2023

Applicants notified as to whether or not they are invited to proceed with submission of a full application – August 4, 2023

Application Deadline (for invited applicants) – September 29, 2023

Notification Date – November 24, 2023

Earliest Date for Release of First Installment of Funds – December 15, 2023

Research Progress Report – 12 and 24 months after receipt of first installment of funds (and at completion, if at a later date)

Objective and Scope

- The objective of the *Labatt Family Innovation Fund in Brain Health* is to support peer-reviewed grants, each of 2-3 years duration, focused on the most promising studies to impact the trajectory and outcomes of eating disorders, depression, or anxiety in young and mid-life adults. **There will be one grant award per year for 2016-2023.**
- The first annual award, in the amount of \$300,000, was granted in 2016 to support research that used a health services approach focused on eating disorders.
- The subsequent annual awards (one award per year for 2017-2023) will each be in the amount of \$340,000 and **will focus on neurobiology.**
- The studies supported by this fund are expected to advance our understanding of the neurobiology of eating disorders, depression, or anxiety in young and mid-life adults (**age criterion: 18-65 years**).

Eligibility

The University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry will receive and evaluate the submitted proposals. Proposals will be deemed eligible based on the following:

- Applicants have a **primary** academic appointment in the University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry **at the rank of Lecturer or Assistant Professor** (not a higher rank) at the time of the application deadline (September 29, 2023).
- Applicants, if successful, agree to have their application shared in confidence with the Labatt Family for internal documentation and auditing purposes.
- Applicants, if successful, agree to provide progress reports to the University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry.
- The research proposals being considered must be focused on neurobiology in the area of eating disorders, depression, or anxiety in young and mid-life adults using either a clinical, basic, or translational approach.

Letter of Interest

Applicants are required to provide a one-page Letter of Interest (minimum 11-point font, 1-inch margins) that lists the following:

- Name and email address of principal applicant
- Names of co-applicants and collaborators for the proposed research
- Name and email address of mentor for the proposed research (see below)
- Title of research proposal
- Description of the proposed project

This Letter of Interest (LOI) will be used to decide which applicants will be invited to submit a full application. It must be emailed to admin.psych@utoronto.ca by 5pm on July 14, 2023. LOIs received after this deadline will not be considered. You will be sent email confirmation of receipt. If you do not receive email confirmation of receipt within 3 business days, please follow-up with admin.psych@utoronto.ca Applicants will be notified by email as to whether or not they are invited to proceed with submission of a full application.

Guidelines for Invited Full Application Submission

- The research proposal should be novel and previously unfunded.
- The University of Toronto must receive the completed application no later than 5pm on September 29, 2023. The magnitude of the project should match the size of the award. It is anticipated that this funding will be used to produce data to support the application of future larger grants.
- Documentation received after the submission deadline will not be submitted for review. The applicant is responsible for ensuring completeness of the application. Incomplete applications or applications that exceed the page limits will not be considered.
- The following are necessary for preparation of the research proposal:
 - 1) Cover page with: title of research proposal; names and degrees of the principal applicant, co-applicants, and mentor; contact information of the principal applicant; email address of the mentor.
 - 2) Narrative Summary of the proposed research (separate page, 300 words limit)
 - 3) Statement of Objectives; Specific Aims and Hypotheses (separate page, one-page limit)
 - 4) Research Strategy (start on new page, 6-page limit). The headings suggested include:
 - Brief review of literature and background information
 - Preliminary data (if available, but not required)
 - Design and Methodology
 - Power Analysis and Data Analytic Plan

- Anticipated Timeline
 - Innovation, Impact, Future research plans, and Knowledge translation
 - 5) References (separate page, one-page limit)
 - 6) Budget with justification, for each year of funding (separate page, one-page limit).
If there is actual or potential budgetary overlap with an existing research grant or grant under review, full details of the overlap must be provided.
 - 7) Relevant training and research experience of principal applicant and collaborators (start on new page, 2-page limit)
 - 8) Principal applicant's curriculum vitae
- The application should be prepared using 11-point or larger typeface and one-inch margins.
 - Appendices and Supplements are not allowed. Any tables, figures, and/or diagrams should be included in the 6-page Research Strategy.
 - The grant application should be accompanied by a signed letter of support from an experienced researcher who is prepared to act as a mentor to the applicant for the duration of the research project (including mentorship in the preparation of the grant application, publications and presentations, and progress and final reports). The mentor's letter of support should include, but not be limited to, the following statements: i) the mentor will be available to supervise and support the applicant's research project, ii) the mentor will ensure that the applicant: a) presents his/her research findings and submits the work for publication in at least one peer-reviewed journal, and b) prepares the progress reports and final report.

Submission of the Application

The grant application, the principal applicant's curriculum vitae, and the signed mentor's letter of support should be sent together by email to admin.psych@utoronto.ca by 5 pm on September 29, 2023. Applications that are late, incomplete, or exceed the page limit will not be considered. The application, curriculum vitae, and the letter of support should be sent as three separate pdf documents, attached to the same email. You will be sent email confirmation of receipt.

Conditions of the Fund

Research Ethics Board Approval

- The successful applicant must provide evidence of Research Ethics Board approval along with consent forms where human subjects are involved in the study, before the funding is released.
- The successful applicant must provide evidence of University Animal Care Committee approval where animals are involved in the study, before the funding is released.
- It is expected that the successful applicant will obtain REB or (when applicable) ACC approval within 3 months of the date of notification of the award

Financial Considerations

- The amount of each grant is intended to cover costs associated with the study, including direct costs (labour and study costs), study drug/device costs (if applicable), and other miscellaneous costs (e.g., publications, presentations, and software licensing fees). The grant will not provide salary support for the investigators. No indirect or administrative costs are provided.

Research and Grant Administration

- The grant recipient must provide an annual progress report and a final report to the University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry summarizing work completed, including any publications, as well as an accounting for funds. These reports are to be submitted at twelve and twenty four

months following grant approval, as well as a completion report if at a later date.

- Release of funds for the second and, if applicable, third years of the grant are conditional on receipt of satisfactory annual progress reports.

Publications

- Grant recipients are expected to present their methods and findings at the Department of Psychiatry Harvey Stancer Research Day and at least one peer reviewed scientific meeting, and to submit their work for publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- All publications and presentations that result from a project supported by the Labatt Family Innovation Fund should carry the following acknowledgement: **“This research was supported by the Labatt Family Innovation Fund in Brain Health at the University of Toronto.”**

Grant Recipient Responsibilities

The following responsibilities must be assumed and carried out by the grant recipient:

- Review and execution of University of Toronto study grant agreement
- Research Ethics Board submission and approval (if applicable)
- Health Canada Clinical Trial Application (CTA) submission and approval (if applicable)
- Compliance with all applicable laws, regulations or guidelines (e.g. ICH-GCP, etc.)
- Study-related activities such as data management, statistical analysis, medical writing, monitoring, etc.
- Registration and posting of study results on <http://prsinfo.clinicaltrials.gov> (if applicable)
- Safety reporting to Health Canada, the research ethics board (as per local requirements), and if a drug/device product is involved, the Product Safety/Pharmacovigilance group for the appropriate company.
- Communication of progress updates to the University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry
- Forward copy of abstract(s)/manuscripts(s) to the University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry upon submission to meetings/journal.

Review Process and Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed and assessed by November 24, 2023. Research proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Significance

- Scientific merit (validity, integrity, originality)
- Contribution to advancement of scientific knowledge in the area of eating disorders, depression, or anxiety
- Clinical relevance or future potential clinical value and applicability

Feasibility

- Feasibility of study design, methodology, analysis
- Adequate power & sample size
- Study budget & proposed timelines
- Relevant training and experience of principal applicant and other investigators

Notification of Decision for Innovation Fund

Grant recipients will be notified of the decision regarding funding around November 24, 2023.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive a notification.