

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued By
Parkinson Canada

CLINICIAN SCIENTIST RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP (2026 Cycle)

Release Date:	September 2, 2025
Application Deadline (date of receipt):	November 3, 2025 (5:00 pm EST)
Application Notice of Decision:	March 2026
Funding Start Date:	July 1 2026
Duration of Award:	2 years

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Important Changes to the 2026 Research Competition

Background

Research Themes of Parkinson Canada

Funds Available

Research Priority Area: Women with Parkinson's

Partnership Programs

Eligibility

Location of Training and Supervision

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice

Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Review Process

Review Criteria

Terms and Conditions

Reporting Requirements and Terms of Funding

Application Procedures

Contact Information

Important Changes to the 2026 Competition

1. **Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence:** A new guidance on the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools has been developed for applicants and for grant reviewers (see the relevant section below for more information).
2. **Research Priority Area: Women and Parkinson's - health and well-being:** Parkinson Canada has earmarked \$100,000 of the research competition budget to research projects with a focus on women's health and well-being in Parkinson's. More details are provided below.

BACKGROUND

Parkinson Canada believes that leadership in programs of care for those with Parkinson's disease is best assumed by medical neurologists or neurosurgeons with special experience, both in the critical management of Parkinson's and in its research. This leadership entails a capacity to work with the various agencies and disciplines involved in the care of individuals with Parkinson's to facilitate the development of better treatments for those with Parkinson's. Relative to the current needs of Canadians with Parkinson's, there is currently a shortage of leaders involved in Parkinson's service and research programs in Canada. Parkinson Canada believes this leadership shortage has the potential to worsen in the next few years.

Parkinson Canada is pleased, therefore, to offer its Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship Program (the "Program") as a strategic initiative to encourage promising young medical professionals to become future leaders in the field of Parkinson's Disease therapeutic management and research. Parkinson Canada intends to provide awards in the amount of \$50,000 or 75,000 per year over a two-year term to outstanding medical professionals who meet the eligibility criteria of the Program and who have been approved by its Trainee Award Committee (the "Trainee Committee"). Funds awarded under the Program are to be used to cover salary, benefits, and expenses for research fellowships in Parkinson's-related areas.

Through this initiative, Parkinson Canada invites fellowship applications from applicants committed to conducting significant biomedical or clinical research in areas relevant to the cure, cause, prevention, improved treatment and/or understanding of Parkinson's disease, while concurrently undergoing clinical training. This initiative is consistent with, and reflects, Parkinson Canada's commitment to support innovation and renewal in the national Parkinson's research field and to foster international leadership potential in this area.

The Program is available to individuals who possess a doctoral qualification (MD) in medicine. Funding for post-MD research fellowships (without clinical training) may be made available through the postdoctoral research fellowship program, to provide support for applicants whose primary focus is research and are not pursuing clinical training/practice. Applicants seeking support for further clinical fellowship training (without a significant research component) should apply to Parkinson Canada's Clinical Movement Disorders Fellowship.

RESEARCH THEMES OF PARKINSON CANADA

Parkinson Canada provides funding to support projects across all fields of research related to Parkinson's Disease. The following Research Themes (described below) have been developed for the purposes of internal tracking and reporting broadly on our research funding history and trends. In your application, you will be asked to choose a primary Research Theme which aligns with your project.

- 1) **Symptomatic Treatments:** treatments that ease outward symptoms of Parkinson's (e.g., medications for tremors).
- 2) **Disease Modifying Therapies:** treatments that target the underlying mechanisms of Parkinson's to interfere with disease progression (E.g. medical interventions targeting α -Synuclein aggregates).
- 3) **Diagnosis & Risk Factors:** understanding risk factors and predictors of Parkinson's for earlier diagnosis and intervention (e.g. biomarkers, genetic studies, etc.).
- 4) **Causes of Parkinson's:** understanding the physiological processes that lead to Parkinson's and its symptoms (ex. alpha-synuclein aggregation, mitochondrial dysfunction, etc.).
- 5) **Living Well with Parkinson's:** interventions, technologies, and programs to improve the quality of life (QoL) for people affected by Parkinson's and studies to understand barriers to better QoL (E.g. diet and exercise interventions).

FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Program offers awards in the amount of either \$50,000 or \$75,000 per year over a two-year term to exceptional eligible applicants who have been approved for funding by the Trainee Committee.

Clinical Training Level	Award Value
Medical Residency	\$50,000/year
Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year

RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA – WOMEN WITH PARKINSON’S: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Parkinson Canada is prioritizing research with a focus on **the health and well-being of women with Parkinson’s**. This focus recognizes that women are uniquely impacted by Parkinson’s due to biological, social, and health care factors that remain underexplored. Eligible projects must explicitly examine issues relevant to women’s health and well-being, such as hormonal influences, symptom expression and treatment response in women, health care access and bias, and psychosocial well-being. For this research priority area, \$100,000 of our competition budget will be earmarked for projects that directly examine sex- and gender-related differences, challenges, and opportunities in Parkinson’s. Applications that do not explicitly address a research question focused on women’s health and well-being will not be considered under this funding priority.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Partnership funding programs are available for this trainee award program. For more information on the available partnership programs, including funding amounts, award durations, and additional application procedures, please visit our [‘Apply for Funding’](#) webpage.

ELIGIBILITY

Parkinson Canada wishes to support training excellence and development of the wide scope of Parkinson’s research in Canada. Applications will be accepted from applicants who meet the eligibility criteria summarized below and who propose to continue their training or conduct research at an “*Approved Institution*” - Canadian post-secondary institutions and their affiliated institutions, including hospitals and research institutes; or other organizations, as determined by the Research and Clinical Advisory Committee of the Board of Directors of Parkinson Canada in consultation with the Trainee Committee, provided that the applicant’s research or research-related activities fall within the mandate of Parkinson Canada.

- Applicants must hold a doctoral degree (MD) in medicine, must be graduates of and must have completed training at a university recognized by Parkinson Canada. Applicants must also be in pursuit of either: **residency training** or **clinical fellowship training** in either clinical neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry or geriatrics. Applicants must be eligible for postgraduate medical training (residents) or licensed to practice in Canada (clinical fellows).
- In addition, the applicant’s proposed training program should include a significant time commitment (at least 20%-time commitment) towards research of Parkinson’s Disease.
- International applicants are encouraged to apply; however, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and/or applicants intending to remain in or relocate to Canada to continue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the fellowship.
- Those who are currently funded by a Parkinson Canada grant, award or fellowship, with outstanding reporting requirements are ineligible to apply. Those who have previously been

funded through a Parkinson Canada Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship, are also ineligible to apply.

Eligibility Table for Trainee Awards

Program	Degree Held	Research Being Pursued	Clinical Training Level	Award Value & Term
Graduate Student Award	BSc	Yes	NA	\$20,000/year – 2 years
Postdoctoral Research Fellowship	PhD (or MD)	Yes	NA	\$45,000/year – 2 years
Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship	MD	Yes	Residency	\$50,000/year – 2 years
	MD	Yes	Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year – 2 years
Clinical Movement Disorders Fellowship	MD	NA	Movement Disorders Clinical Fellowship	\$75,000/year – 1 year

LOCATION OF TRAINING & SUPERVISION

Awards granted under this Program shall be held in trust by the Approved Institution at which the proposed supervisor of the successful applicant (an “Approved Supervisor”) holds a faculty appointment.

An Approved Supervisor should be an individual who is a leader in the development of a Parkinson’s program, actively directing research in the field of Parkinson’s disease. An Approved Supervisor must be able to provide the successful applicant with a strong training environment in an academic health sciences centre with a well-established Parkinson’s program in movement disorders. Other training locations may be considered by the Trainee Committee, provided that the facility is an Approved Institution and the clinical research or clinical research-related activities fall within the mandate of the Program.

Applicants proposing to train at an Approved Institution located outside Canada will be considered to be eligible to participate in the Program, provided that he or she is committed to returning to Canada to pursue his or her career following completion of the two-year term of the Program. Submission of an application under these conditions is deemed to be a binding pledge, and successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Parkinson Canada to this effect.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE (EDIJ)

Parkinson Canada is committed to advancing the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Justice throughout the organization. In the 2026 Research Competition, we are asking all applicants to complete a self-identification questionnaire, as a first step to better understand the demographics of our applicant pool and of our grant recipients.

We are complying with the highest standards of privacy and security to ensure that this deeply personal information is collected and stored in a secure manner. Our self-identification questionnaire closely mirrors the form used by federal funding agencies (E.g. CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC), and covers the same demographic dimensions. We are asking that all applicants to our research competition complete the questionnaire, but an applicant can choose the option “I prefer not to answer” for any question where they don’t feel comfortable sharing information.

The information from these self-identification questionnaires will only be accessed and reviewed after all applications have been fully reviewed and funding recommendations are completed, to ensure that this information will not be used to make any funding decisions. This personal information will only be reviewed by 1-2 staff members who have been trained in EDIJ principles.

All collected answers will be transferred into a de-identified aggregated format for internal review of our grant programs and to identify any major gaps where we are not reaching or attracting research applicants from historically underrepresented groups. We also promise that any data that we share with the public or key stakeholders from these findings will be in this de-identified aggregated format to protect the identity of individuals who have shared their personal information with us.

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

For Applicants: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that information included in their applications is true and accurate and that all information sources are correctly referenced. Applicants should be aware that generative AI tools may lead to the incorrect recognition of source publications. Applicants must state if and how generative AI has been used in the development of their application. In cases where generative AI has been used, the applicant must also review and confirm the accuracy of the content. Applicants should also be aware that most online AI tools retain submitted information, and that intellectual property or confidential information (including identifiable patient data) uploaded onto AI tools may be retained and used in the future by these tools. Any potentially sensitive data should be de-identified or anonymized prior to upload.

For Grant Reviewers: The use of publicly available generative AI tools is **strictly prohibited** for grant reviewers for evaluating grant applications. This includes using translation tools such as DeepL or creating summaries using ChatGPT. Uploading application materials into generative AI tools could result in breaches of privacy and the potential loss of custody of intellectual property and confidential information.

REVIEW PROCESS

The evaluation of Applications submitted to Parkinson Canada will be completed by the Trainee Committee through a peer review process. The Scientific Reviewers on the Trainee Committee are composed of prominent neurologists, neurosurgeons, neuropathologists and neuroscientists from across Canada. The peer review process is a cornerstone of Parkinson Canada's research program and provides for the highest quality of objective adjudication.

The Trainee Committee is responsible for the evaluation of all Applications submitted to Parkinson Canada in response to this Request for Applications, to rate each of the Applications so that they may be ranked in order of priority for funding by Parkinson Canada. External reviewers will be solicited for additional expertise as needed. The Trainee Committee anticipates that it will provide each applicant whose Application to participate in the Program has been declined with written notice of such decision and where possible, a brief written critique of the substance of their Application.

In addition to our Scientific Reviewers, Parkinson Canada is proud to involve the voices of People affected by Parkinson's in the evaluation of all of our grants and awards. As a patient focused organization, we want to leverage the unique and valuable perspective of lived experience experts into our decisions on which projects will be funded. That way we can ensure that the identified needs and interests of people affected by Parkinson's are reflected in our research program. This year, our lived experience reviewers will review the Project Impact and Patient Engagement Statements and provide a score that will account for 10% of the overall application score. Their score will be based on the application's potential impact towards the lives of Canadians with Parkinson's and the applicant's efforts to engage the community of people affected by Parkinson's into the design of their project and their knowledge dissemination efforts.

This year we have established a new Advisory Group, which is composed of past lived experience reviewers. This Advisory Group will hold 2 virtual meetings in Sept.-Oct. where interested applicants will be able to meet with and get feedback from past lived experience experts on their applications as it

pertains to how they design their studies to improve the experience of patient participants in clinical studies, that project outcomes are designed to maximize impact to daily lives of people with Parkinson's, and that future knowledge translation activities are done with the general Parkinson's community in mind. For more information on this opportunity please email ko.currie@parkinson.ca.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The principal consideration used to evaluate applications is research excellence potential. There are, however, a variety of additional criteria that may be considered by the Trainee Committee in the evaluation process. Each of the criteria listed below will be considered in assigning the overall ranking of the application, weighting them as indicated for each application. Note that the application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific or social impact and thus deserving of a high priority score. For example, an investigator may propose to carry out important work that by its nature is not innovative but is essential to expand knowledge and understanding of Parkinson's disease in a given field.

- **CANDIDATE – 40%**
 - Academic Record
 - Honours & Awards
 - Research Experience
 - Letters of Reference/Support
 - Publications
- **PROJECT – 40%**
 - Project Novelty (10%)
 - Project Feasibility (10%)
 - Impact of Project and Relevance to Parkinson's Disease (20%)
- **SUPERVISOR/ENVIRONMENT – 20%**
 - Supervisor's Research Track Record
 - Training environment and opportunity to learn

In addition to the above criteria all applications will also be reviewed with respect to the following:

- Does the applicant show promise of significantly advancing biomedical or clinical research in the area of Parkinson's disease? Is the applicant appropriately trained and well suited to enter into this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the applicant? Is this project relevant to pursuing a greater understanding of Parkinson's for the applicant?
- Is the research work that the applicant will be involved in of high quality? Are the applicant's conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses of the proposed project/area of study adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate? Does it contribute to Canada's leadership potential in Parkinson's knowledge in that field? Where does this work position itself in relation to world knowledge of Parkinson's at this time?
- Is the project or project supervisor positioned to build significantly on the existing strengths of the individual researcher? Does the work stretch the experience and professional knowledge of the applicant?
- Is the scientific environment in which the work will be done likely to contribute to the applicant's learning? Is there evidence of institutional support of the training program?
- The adequacy of the proposed protection of humans, animals, or of the environment, to the extent that they may be adversely affected by the project proposed in the application. The Trainee Committee will also examine the provisions for the protection of human subjects (if any) and the safety of the research environment.

Where a trainee and supervisor are submitting an application to the same competition, trainees submitting their own proposal (not identical to the proposal submitted by their supervisor) will be given priority ranking.

GENERAL POLICIES

This Request for Applications made by Parkinson Canada is subject to the General Policies (the “Policies”) contained in Parkinson Canada’s Research Program Application Guidelines (the “Guidelines”), which the applicant shall be deemed to have accepted upon submission to Parkinson Canada of an Application to participate in the Program. Failure to comply with the Policies may result, in addition to any other remedies Parkinson Canada may have at law, in termination of the Program and exclusion of the applicant from future grant and fellowship award competitions.

A successful applicant who has received an award under the Program may not transfer the award to another institution unless exceptionally approved by the chairs of the Research Policy Committee and Trainee Committee (please see Guidelines).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS OF FUNDING

All successful applicants shall comply with the reporting obligations outlined in the Guidelines.

Parkinson Canada requires fellowship recipients to submit Annual and Final Progress Reports. The advance of the portion of the award to be made in the second year of the term of the Program is conditional upon submission of an **Annual Progress Report** to Parkinson Canada in substance and form satisfactory to the Trainee Committee at **the end of the first year** of the term of the Program. The report shall be submitted to research@parkinson.ca no later than the one-year anniversary date of the start of the Program. Progress report guidelines and instructions will be provided by Parkinson Canada in advance of the report deadline.

A **Final Progress Report** detailing the results of the successful applicant’s progress, in substance and form satisfactory to the Trainee Committee, shall be submitted to research@parkinson.ca no later than **three months after** the termination of the two-year term of the Program.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are submitted online through the Parkinson Canada online application system called SMaply. It can be accessed through the following link which is also available on the Parkinson Canada website at <https://parkinsoncan.smaply.io/>. **The deadline to submit applications is November 3, 2025 (5:00 pm EST).** Applications received after this time will not be considered and will be disqualified from the competition. There will be no exceptions.

Applications for Clinician Scientist Research Fellowship include the following:

Important note on document formatting: When preparing your application, all application documents to be uploaded must have page margins of **1 inch minimum (2.54 cm)** and use **12-point font** (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri). **Failing to follow these instructions may negatively impact the evaluation of your application and could lead to it being withdrawn.**

1. **Personal Statement** from the applicant expressing his/her interest in the field of Parkinson’s, and his/her career goals and evidence of the applicant’s commitment to Parkinson’s disease. This statement should include the relevance of proposed training to the applicant’s future career (**2 pages max; 2.5 pages French**).

2. **Project Summary:** Please state in **500 words or less** (600 words French) the scientific question being asked, the methods you will use to address it, and the expected outcome. *(To save space, you do not need to include basic information such as the description of Parkinson's disease)*
3. **Project Impact Statement:** Please describe your project and how it will impact the lives of Canadians affected by Parkinson's using language for a general audience (**750 words max; 900 words FR**). This section will be scored by Lived Experience Expert Reviewers (whose score accounts for 10% of the overall application). Applicants should use the following subheadings to organize their statement:
 - **Background** – what is the current state of research for your project?
 - **Hypothesis/Research Question** – what do you hope to learn?
 - **Methodology** – what tools and techniques will be used?
 - **Impact** – how will the project outcome affect the lives of Canadians with Parkinson's and the research community (short-term and long-term)? Include estimated timelines to clinical use, describe the possible benefits to daily life or access to healthcare, and any new scientific resources that may be generated for future use.
4. **Patient Involvement Statement:** Please state in **150 words or less** (180 words FR) how you have engaged (or plan to engage) with people affected by Parkinson's in the design of your study. This engagement strategy may include considerations for patient recruitment, requirements for participation in clinical activities, or knowledge translation activities for the project outcomes. Please note that this section will also be reviewed and scored by lived experience reviewers.
5. **Project Narrative: (3 pages max; 3.5 pages French)** including:
 - **Background** of proposed studies and **hypothesis** to be tested.
 - **Specific aims** of the research
 - **Methods** and experimental details.
 - The 3-page maximum applies only to the project narrative and does not include supporting documentation described below.
6. **Relevant Support Materials**
 - Literature references
 - Photographs, tables, figures
 - Letters of collaboration
 - Relevant published work (max 3 publications)
7. **Biographical information** of the applicant to be provided by completing the Parkinson Canada Biographical Sketch Form (for trainees), including a summary of:
 - **Education & Degrees**
 - **Positions & Honours** – previous positions (including current), list of honours, awards, and positions on any committees.
 - **Publications** - where the applicant has participated as a co-author, first-author, etc. (describe the contribution of the applicant for each publication). Includes scientific papers, book chapters, etc.
 - **Other Contributions** – posters, oral presentations, commercialization activities and intellectual property.
 - **Funding** – list all current, pending, and completed funding support.
 - Maximum 4 pages
8. **Official transcripts** of the applicant's complete academic record to date, including degrees and specialty certifications. Foreign transcripts **MUST** be accompanied by a certified English or French interpretation and a clear explanation of the grading system.
9. **Assessment Forms** of Candidate for a Fellowship completed by **two (2) sponsors/referees**, accompanied by **statements of support** (500 words max) from each such sponsor. Sponsors should be recent supervisors from the program in which the applicant's specialty training was taken and should include the director of the program in which the applicant's neurology or neurosurgery training was received.
10. **Signature of an authorized signing official** of the applicant's host institution.
11. **Supervisor Support Materials:**

- a. **Supervisor`s biographical information:** using the Parkinson Canada biographical sketch form (for Principal Investigators). 4 pages maximum.
- b. **Letter of support** from the proposed supervisor (max 1 page)
- c. **Description** of where research will be conducted and the resources available there (maximum 500 words)

12. **EDIJ Self-Identification Questionnaire:** All applicants are required to complete a self-identification questionnaire on SMaply (under the EDIJ Self-Identification Questionnaire Program). The purpose of this questionnaire is for Parkinson Canada to better understand the demographics of our applicant pool and of our grant recipients. The applicant may choose the option “I prefer not to answer” for any question where they do not feel comfortable sharing personal information. The answers provided will have no bearing on any funding decisions and will only be used for internal evaluation of our funding programs. All answers from the questionnaires will be migrated into a de-identified aggregated format so that no responses can be tracked back to any one individual, and all responses will be deleted from SMaply before Aug. 31, 2026.

Applications may be submitted in either English or French. Best efforts will be made to assign French-speaking reviewers with appropriate research expertise for any applications that are submitted in French. In accordance with CIHR guidelines and evidence that documents written in French require more space than similar documents written in English, we will grant longer page/word allowances for applications written fully in French. French-speaking applicants may also ask to have any application guides and materials translated into French. For more information please contact research@parkinson.ca.

All applications must be submitted via our online application system (SMaply - <https://parkinsoncan.smapply.io/>). Please retain copies of all application documents in case there are any issues accessing application files. Incomplete applications or applications received later than **November 3, 2025 (5:00 pm EST)** will not be considered under any circumstances. Any applications in violation of these guidelines are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the Trainee Committee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO:

The Parkinson Canada [‘Apply for Funding’](#) webpage, or contact Ko Currie (*Research Funding and Partnerships Manager*), ko.currie@parkinson.ca.