MARATHON OF HOPE CANCER CENTRES NETWORK

RÉSEAU DES CENTRES D'ONCOLOGIE DU MARATHON DE L'ESPOIR

MOHCCN CLINICIAN-SCIENTIST AWARD

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS 2027

Purpose

To provide outstanding young clinician investigators with funding to support high quality research in precision oncology for projects that directly align with MOHCCN. The award is designed to support young investigators as they develop their careers as independent clinician-scientists, in close collaboration and mentorship with established Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network (MOHCCN) funded-teams.

Scope

Support under this Request for Applications (RFA) is targeted at high-quality, clinically-related research, providing information that may form the basis of innovative cancer prevention, diagnosis and/or treatment. Proposed projects are expected to show a clear link to MOHCCN. In general research supported by these awards should include, but may not be limited to studies that develop new:

- Ways of generating therapeutically actionable biological cancer data
- Types of therapeutically actionable biological cancer data
- Tools to analyze existing rich, complex or large datasets, and
- Precision oncology trial design, conduct and analysis.

Applicants must be mentored by researcher(s) (clinician and/or scientist) currently associated with a MOHCCN-funded study. Special consideration will be afforded to applicants who include plans for inclusion of marginalized populations in their work.

Support Offered

Up to four awards of $87,500 each per annum are tenable for **three years** and provide:

- Approved research operating expenses for the research project proposed.

The sponsoring, eligible Canadian host institution is required to ensure eligible cash match funding is available to this MOHCCN Clinician-Scientist Award with a similar or greater amount that will be used to augment the project's research expenses.

Eligibility

To apply you should:

- Be a physician (MD, or international equivalent) and are eligible to start, continue, or have completed their subspeciality training (medical oncology, hematology-oncology, pediatric oncology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology and pathology, etc.)
- Have completed MD or MD PhD degrees by the time the award is taken up
- Be a Canadian citizen or a Permanent Resident of Canada
- Have a valid, active Canadian medical licence
- Be within the first five calendar years of their first faculty appointment at an eligible Canadian hospital or academic health sciences centre[1]
- Be planning an investigative career in clinical oncology
- Have a mentor in the proposed research field from the sponsoring Institution. The mentor must assume responsibility and provide guidance for the research
- Have a letter of commitment from the eligible Canadian hospital or academic health sciences centre:
    - Confirming the date of appointment of the applicant which can **EITHER** be no more than one year later than the start of the award **OR** be no more than five calendar years before the start of the award, and;
    - Indicating the provision of direct support for the applicant to spend dedicated time for research, including the amount of time reserved for the Applicant to conduct research.

Ineligible to Apply

- Applicants who currently hold a Terry Fox New Investigator Award
- Applicant who currently hold or have previously held an MOHCCN Clinician-Scientist award.

The MOHCCN is committed to equity, diversity and inclusivity and strives to promote inclusive excellence in its research programs. We welcome eligible applicants of diverse backgrounds to apply for our funding opportunities.

The MOHCCN would like to offer additional supports to applicants from underserved populations and those underrepresented in genomics research . Additional supports may include mentorship opportunities and additional access to matching funds (i.e. one or more award(s) may be granted

[1] Interruptions in your work such as parental leave will be taken into account when determining eligibility. Applicants are advised to clearly and fully describe any interruptions or delays that affected the continuity of their work in the "Work Experience" section and may address it briefly in the "Personal Statment" section of the TFRI CV.

without the need for matching funds). If matching funds are a barrier for an applicant, they are encouraged to submit an application and include a justification regarding a lack of matching funds in the Canadian Spectrum section in the Full Application. Applicants who identify as a member of one or more underserved communities and who are interested in these additional supports are invited to complete the optional Canadian Spectrum section in the Full Application.

For more information , please refer to the MOHCCN Underserved and Underrepresented Population Guideline, developed by the Canadian Spectrum Working Group.

Funding Envelope

The MOHCCN has an initial funding envelope sufficient to fund up to four Clinician-Scientist Awards in this round. We expect to announce additional rounds in subsequent years.

How to Apply

1. A *Registration of Intent* is required by **Thursday December 17th, 2026** (11:59 pm, British Columbia time) to moh@tfri.ca.
   - Submit to TerryFoxTrack https://tfri.smartsimple.ca
2. Invitations to submit Full Applications will be sent by **December 23rd, 2026.**
3. A *Full Application* is required by **Tuesday February 9th, 2027** (11:59 pm, British Columbia time)
   - Submit to TerryFoxTrack https://tfri.smartsimple.ca
4. Review process – **March to May 2027**
5. Notifications to all applicants: **mid-June 2027**
6. Funding Start Date: **July 1, 2027**

The MOHCCN Clinician-Scientist Award Application Guide 2027 will provide detailed guidance to assist applicants preparing their proposal.

Application Advice

This is a premiere research funding program in Canada; as such, reviewers expect high quality applicants with clearly defined mentorship support for candidates. Reviewers normally assess:

- The potential impact of the research and the fit to the scope of the RFA, **including the connection to MOHCCN**.
- The calibre and potential of the applicant, and the percentage of time the candidate will be dedicating to the project.

- The excellence and scientific merit of the proposed research; a research proposal that is creative, innovative.
- The suitability and mentorship plan offered by the mentor; Mentors must be engaged on the project.
- The quality and quantity of support from the sponsoring Institution (research environment, other financial support, dedicated percentage of time for research, and long-term commitment to help the applicant realize their career development in clinical oncology).
- The response from the applicant to reviewers' comments from previous, unsuccessful submissions (if the application is a resubmission).

Please note that members of the MOHCCN Patient Working Group will also be invited to provide feedback regarding applications during the review process. This working group has recently developed a guideline to support researchers in developing meaningful, respectful, and effective partnerships with persons with lived and living experience (PWLLE) during their research.

Conditions of Funding

Successful applicants will receive their funds following execution of a standard MOHCCN Research Project Grant Agreement (RPGA) with TFRI which fully details the conditions of funding as well as reporting schedules. Funds for Clinician-Scientist projects will be provided by TFRI directly to each collaborating institution.

Clinician-Scientist funded project proposals require a minimum cash match of 1:1 of the TFRI-provided funds, unless otherwise notified. Eligible matching cash fund guidelines are included in Appendix A of the Application Form. We require Cash Match Commitment Letters from an authorized official of each eligible source organization confirming the matching cash funds that will be made available to support the application budget. The work plan part of the Application includes a table to list all the eligible sources of the committed matching cash funds and what part of the project those funds support. In-kind support does not qualify as eligible matching cash funds.

Cash Match Commitment Letters may cover the full award term but must cover the 2027-28 fiscal year budget as a minimum. Subsequently, updated Cash Match Commitment Letters must be provided annually (February) for the following fiscal year. Failure to provide updated or appropriate letters may result in the termination of the RPGA. Note that expenditures made from both TFRI-provided and cash-match funds must be reported quarterly to TFRI. As required by Health Canada, TFRI will coordinate an annual external audit on all sources of and expenditures reported from cash match funding.

MOHCCN Membership Prerequisite

A prerequisite to receiving TFRI MOHCCN funds through RPGA agreements, is that the applicant's institution must first be a MOHCCN Member by agreeing to the terms of the MOHCCN Network Master Agreement through the signing of a Joinder Letter. The MOHCCN Network Master Agreement and Joinder letters will be made available to any applying institution if they are not already a Network Member. Requests for these documents should be made to jmicholuk@tfri.ca.

Applicants and sponsoring Institutions are expected to observe TFRI's Research Administration Policy. This includes:

a. Certificates

Before funding is made available, the Applicants must obtain from the sponsoring Institution all applicable certificates, including:

1. *Biohazards*. For projects involving use of biological material, a certificate guaranteeing that the project will be conducted under conditions which satisfy the Canadian Biosafety Standard (CBS) 2nd edition (2015) and the Canadian Biosafety Handbook (CBH), 2nd edition (2015). (http://canadianbiosafetystandards.collaboration.gc.ca/)
2. *Animal Care*. For projects involving use of experimental animals, a certificate guaranteeing that all animals will be cared for and studied under conditions meeting the standards set forth in the Canadian Council on Animal Care's "Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals" Vol 1 (1993). (https://www.ccac.ca/)
3. *Human Studies.* For projects involving human subjects, a certificate stating that the protocols and methods have been reviewed by the Institutional Research Ethics Board and found to be acceptable in accordance with current edition of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: 'Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans' (2014) (www.pre.ethics.gc.ca). If studies use investigational compounds, regulatory approval from Canada's Health Protection Branch is also required.
4. *Use of Human and Biological Samples*. TFRI is committed to ensuring that highquality bio-specimens are used in research it funds, as these yield high, reproducible quality data. For this reason, TFRI requires all applicants for funding to certify that (i) all prospective (new) bio-specimens included in the TFRI-funded research will be collected in accordance with the standards set by the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (https://www.ctrnet.ca/resources/operating-procedures) and/or the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments Act (CLIA) of the UnitedStates (https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/CLIA/index.html) and/or

(ii) all retrospective (old) bio-specimens used in the TFRI-funded research have come from a CTRNet or CLIA-certified bio-repository. Links to the CTRNet certification program and registered biobanks can be found at https://biobanking.org/webs/certification. Applicants are required to submit evidence of current certification and participation in external quality assurance programs with the proposal.

5. *Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Research*. TFRI endorses the guidelines set forward by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research on 'Human Pluripotent Stem Cells' now integrated into the 'Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2), Chapter 12. Section F (2nd edition) (https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2018_chapter12-chapitre12.html). Applicants are required to contact TFRI before submitting an application for support of cancer research requiring any use of human pluripotent stem cells.

b. Reporting

TFRI requires from awardees (1) an Annual Scientific Research Progress Report, (2) an Annual Research Metrics Report, and (3) Quarterly Financial Statements in a format to be provided. TFRI also expects the Clinician-Scientists to contribute to/present at TFRI and MOHCCN Meetings during the term of the award, if requested.

c. Project Title & Use of TFRI logo

Funded Applications are to be called 'The Marathon of Hope Clinician-Scientist Award in [*title of program*]'. Investigators are expected to comply with TFRI and MOHCCN Visual Identity Guidelines as appropriate, to be found at: www.tfri.ca and www.mohccn.ca

d. Employment Equity

TFRI is committed to compliance with the Canadian Employment Equity Act and to ensuring that our funded research programs encourage equal employment opportunities to women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. All Funded Applications are required to employ non-discriminatory hiring practices in their workplaces.

e. Inclusion of sex and gender in research design where appropriate

Applicants are expected to include in the proposal how they have considered sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA), as appropriate. The purpose of SGBA is to promote rigorous science that is sensitive to sex and gender and therefore has the potential to expand our understanding of health determinants for all people[2].

Applicants may also include additional statements regarding inclusion of other minorities in their research, including hard-to-reach populations.

[2] Please refer to http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html for more resources on SGBA.

For inquiries, please contact:

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Date: November 19th, 2026